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THE
INNOCENTS
A POEM

REV. SAMUEL WRAY







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THE INNOCENTS.



THE INNOCENTS.

A POEM

IN THREE BOOKS.

BY THE
REV. SAMUEL WRAY.



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TO
THE REVERED MEMORY
OF THE
REV. SAMUEL JACKSON,
WHO
AFTER MANY YEARS SPENT IN THEIR SERVICE,
DIED AT NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE,
AUGUST 4th, 1861, AGED 75
STILL THINKING AND SPEAKING
OF
“THE CHILDREN,”
THIS WORK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY
HIS NEPHEW,
THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

WHEN this work was commenced, the dimensions whereunto it would grow were not contemplated. Some forty or fifty verses were written as a special attempt to give solace in a case of peculiar sorrow. Of the four children of a worthy couple, belonging to one of the writer's pastoral charges, the first three died in their infancy: the other lived several years, and then died suddenly. After this, the verses, or selections from them with additions, were made use of in several similar cases; and thus they grew into a poem of considerable length. Then first was conceived the thought of a serious work, dealing with the question of Infant Salvation, and with such considerations as might seem best calculated to administer consolation to parents weeping for their children, and refusing to be comforted because they are not.

If, as was hoped by the pious poet-sage of Bemerton, careless people may be “rhymed to good,” sad and thoughtful people are perhaps likelier to be rhymed to cheerfulness. From the old days of Jubal, song has always been a great consoler; and many an evil spirit beside king Saul’s has been exorcised, when some singer has raised his voice, or some minstrel has “played with his hand.” For such a work there appeared to be both room and need, at least in this branch of literature; and so it was undertaken, not without fear of failure, but still with some hope that, in this case also,

“A verse may find him, who a sermon flies.”

When some progress had been made, the subject of the Second Book was added to the original design, with a view to wider usefulness. To the overwhelming importance of that subject, some wise men believe, Christians generally are not more than half-awake.

Book First—Rachel Weeping, relates to the death of Infants, “from two years old and under;” Book Second—The Nursery, to the Christian dedication and training of the young; Book Third—The Vacant Crib, to the loss of children who have left the cradle,

and survived to be regarded not only with a more robust affection, but also with hopes more fully developed and more confidently cherished.

The best poetry, it has been said, leaves something to be thought out, and guessed at ; but is not this to confound the poet's functions with the enigmatical's ? If scope is sought for the exercise of cunning and ingenuity, why not go to the enigma proper ? Poetry of such a kind must be chiefly valuable as offering employment to those who have abundant leisure ; and even to them, there are themes in regard to which "dark sayings" seem not to befit the "harp." He who offers you consolation should not, surely, make it difficult to grasp ; and conviction, like Joab's dagger, should go straight to the fifth rib. In agreement with these notions, though the result may not always be satisfactory, clearness, brevity, and simplicity have been sedulously studied.

On the score of originality, while great pretensions are not made, intentional borrowing is emphatically disclaimed. Much indebtedness is thankfully acknowledged to the venerable man to whose memory the book is dedicated. This, however, is moral rather

than literary, resulting mainly from the force and wisdom with which he laboured, in season and out of season, to set forth the importance of the subject handled in Book Second. Hints have been accepted from various quarters ; but, on the whole, the writer believes himself as innocent of obligation to his forerunners, as his forerunners were to theirs, and they to the fathers, and they to the rabbins, and they to the Book of Jasher.

All men, from Adam downwards, have had their thoughts respecting children ; and, possibly, not much that is original remains to be said about them. Little children, nevertheless, are great facts, always with us, and not to be ignored. The setting of these in our midst, and their mysterious withdrawal from us, are among “the works of God” which ought to be “sought out ;” and as “Lambs” of the Great Shepherd, His servants are bound to “feed” them. “Therefore, every scribe instructed to the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”

The work is called a Poem, in the belief that, though it consists of a hundred and

sixty pieces, these form a united whole. Should the reader think it anything else, let him call it what he pleases.

It was first written in sections without headings, like the Laureate's beautiful *In Memoriam*, and then to each of these were prefixed an appropriate title and text of Scripture, to be helpful to the reader. Both here, and in the sections generally, it has been a chief point to honour The Book, which alone offers suitable guidance for the religious nurture of children, and sufficient consolation when God has taken them. Where its guidance is not, and was not intended to be satisfying, recourse is had to dreams and visions—mere vagaries of a fancy without authoritative control. But even these, it is earnestly hoped, will not be deemed incompatible with the profoundest reverence for the sacred oracles.

The writer's aim has been to produce such a work as may prove an acceptable and useful present to Christian parents, either bringing up their children, or lamenting the loss of them. With what success this has been attempted, is for thee, O gentle Reader! not for him to say. Engaged in an arduous calling, the work has consumed the major

part of his leisure for many years—that leisure being almost limited to three midnight hours, and to quiet walks in rural lanes to distant appointments. If he has failed, be well assured that his intentions were good and kindly; and be not bitter against one the head and front of whose offending is, that he desired to serve thee, and—could not.

S. W.

THORNCLIFFE,
SHEFFIELD, *April 15, 1880.*

I.

Be pure thy motives, lofty be thy aim ;
Sing not for the fool's smile, the knave's mean
praise :
To Truth, Love, Justice, dedicate thy lays,
And their great Guardian shall exalt thy name
Above the stars. Far better His acclaim,
Than all men's hallelujahs, all Earth's bays :
More terrible, through all the coming days,
Than all men's scorn, will be His righteous blame.
He comes not reaping, where He has not sown :
Of Milton, Milton's talents He requires ;
Of Wordsworth, Wordsworth's ; of thyself, thy
own—
No more, no less. The man who but aspires
To please his Master, shall achieve his will.
Rise to thy calling, and thyself fulfil.

II.

THOU hear'st a Voice commanding, answer make ;
A bud with life thrills in thee, let it blow ;
Upwells a spring, unfettered be its flow ;
The slumbering child gets restless, let him wake.
The robin needs must sing ; let him betake
Himself to bush, or byre, or barley-mow,
To cheer the toilers plodding to and fro,
Ease their heart's burden, and relieve its ache.
Quench not the Spirit. Gentle poet, sing !
Assail Earth's sadness, tell God's goodness free ;
Things "old," things "new" out of thy treasure
bring.
Men do not praise thee ? What is that to thee ?
Thy fellow-servants smite thee ? Still, thy King
Hath said, once and for ever, Follow Me !

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THE INNOCENTS.

Invocation.

Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them.—
Nehemiah ix. 20.

SPIRIT ! invoked by Milton, deign¹
To be invoked by me :
I court, to inspire my humbler strain,
No other Muse but Thee.

Thou, in Thy sevenfold influence strong,
Hovering on dove-like wings,
Didst breathe into his soul a song
That through the ages rings.

With him I fain would justify
The ways of God to men :
Be Thou, O gentle Spirit, nigh,
To guide my virgin pen !

¹ *Paradise Lost*, I. 1-26.

I ask not for the flooding light
 That dazed his sightless eyes,
 And thronged his miserable night
 With glorious fantasies ;

But by Thy favour, I would sing
 A simpler, lowlier lay,
 That shall a timely blessing bring
 To some sad hearts to-day.

The grace to Israel's Chief made known,
 When wandering in the wild—¹
 Was it not unto Samuel shown,
 The simple Prophet-Child ?²

The Sun that lights Creation up,
 Perfumes the mignonette ;
 Relieves the bended buttercup,
 And paints the violet.

The birds which haunt our summer bowers—
 Thou plumest, Lord, their wing ;
 Thy love informs their little powers,
 Nor can they choose but sing :

The lark, that poureth from the sky
 His descant rich and clear,
 Well-pleased, though hid from every eye,
 To charm the listening ear ;

¹ Exodus xxxiii. 9-11.

² 1 Samuel iii. 10.

Sweet robin-redbreast, faithful still,
When others fail and flee,
Who carols on the snowy sill,
Or icebound elder-tree ;

The swallow, with her twittering tone,
Returned from sunny isles ;
And even the sparrow, all alone,
That chirrups on the tiles.

I may not to the zenith soar,
On skylark pinions strong,
As did the favoured Bards of yore,
And flood the world with song :

But let me “cheep,” to darkened homes
Some present cheer to bring ;
Or twitter low when Winter comes,
Sweet promises of Spring.

For Winter, worse than clothes the moors,
And riots in the wind,
Is that within those silent doors,
The Winter of the mind.

I sing not for the great and wise,
Who ask no light from Thee :
Who sounding phrases rather prize
Than sweet simplicity.

No dark enigmas to propound,
 To trace no mystic lore,
 No truths to hide in wells profound,
 Thy blessing I implore.¹

Of happy homes, made desolate
 By Sorrow, I would tell ;
 Of Children, wept in anguish great,
 Whom Jesus loveth well ;

How souls, their Saviour-God's at first,
 May their Preserver know,
 By Thee baptized, in virtue nursed,
 And never serve the Foe ;

And of Thy influences kind,
 Which evermore combine
 To pour sweet solace on the mind,
 O Comforter Divine !

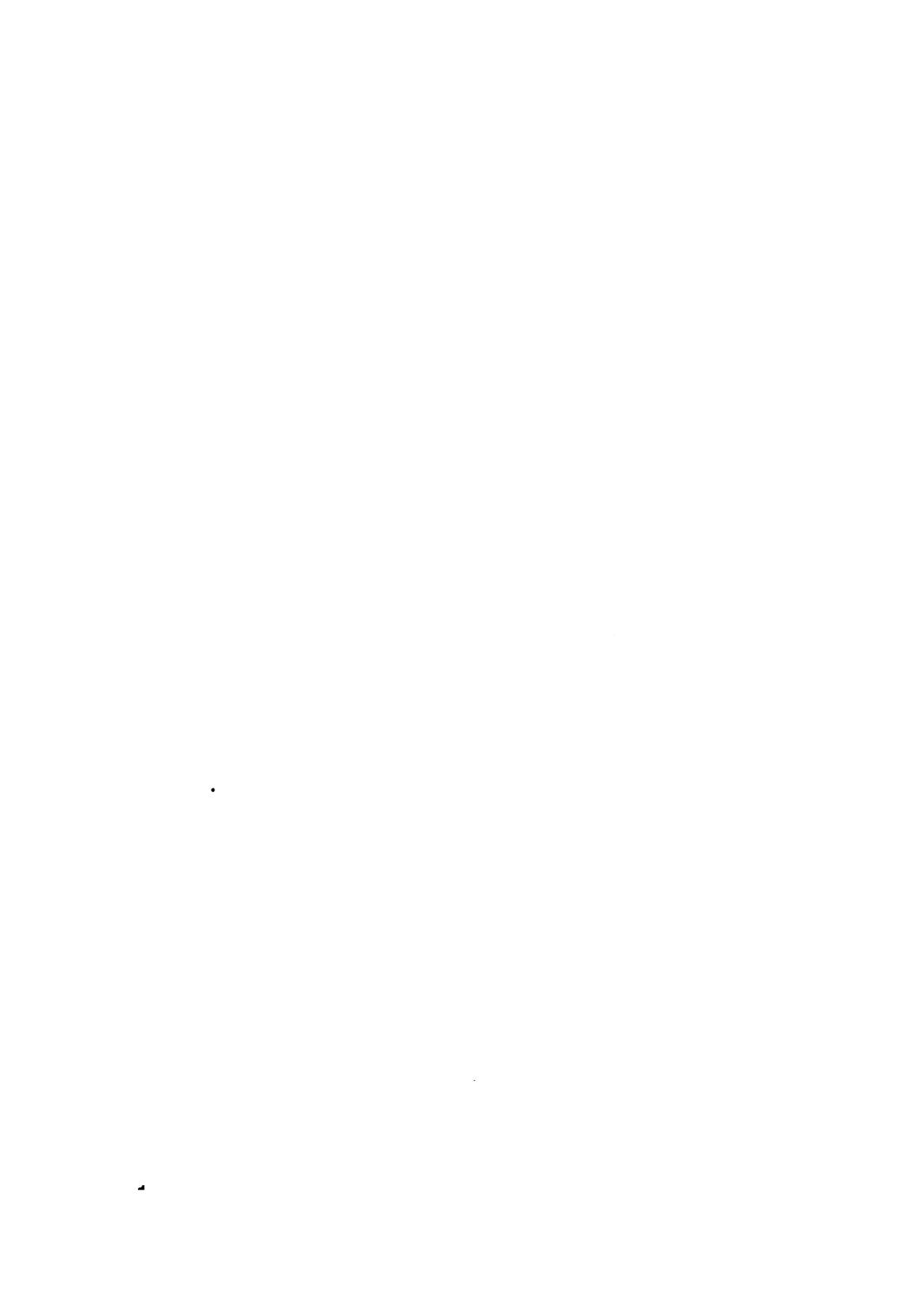
For this I now invoke Thy Name :
 My minstrelsy inspire,
 My eyes illume, my soul inflame
 With pure celestial fire.

I do not ask the lofty lay
 That shall through time endure ;
 But make me, for my little day,
 God's laureate to His poor.

¹ Riddle who list, for me.—*Herbert.*

If less to me is given, the shame
Of low deserts be mine :
If more, the strength, the light, the aim,
The glory—all are Thine.

That they who hear my lowlier strain,
May seek their help from Thee,
Spirit ! invoked by Milton, deign
To be invoked by me.



FIRST BOOK.

Rachel Weeping.

In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.—Matthew ii. 18.

I.

W^{ri}tten C^hildless.

If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.—
Gen. xlvi. 14.

Oh spirits sad, oh hearts despoiled,
 Oh lives whose light is gone,
Left in the world without a child¹
 To set your love upon !

Oh silent Sire, oh weeping Wife,
 Oh pair to Misery known,
Doomed from the radiant noon of life,
 To live and die alone !

Oh judgment deep, oh dark device,
 Surpassing mortal ken,
A heavenly boon repeated thrice,
 And thrice required again !

Ere thrice the sun had kept his rounds,
 Three gifts of countless price,
Three lives, three deaths, three grassy mounds,
 Two spirits broken thrice—

¹ Genesis xv. 2.

All these, a motley, changing crowd—
 Now welcomed, now deplored,
 Or gladdened, or with anguish bowed ;
 Oh, stricken of the Lord !

The tears on other cheeks that burn,
 Survivors may beguile ;
 But when, to you, shall joy return,
 Or fond affection smile ?¹

II.

Rachel Weeping.

How forcible are right words ! but what does your anguish reprove ?—Job vi. 25.

IN Rama was a weeping heard,
 A lamentation great,
 A wail that every spirit stirred,
 A grief disconsolate.

From Rachel rose that piercing cry
 Upon the startled air,
 A Mother's hopeless agony,
 A broken heart's despair.

For Herod bade his crafty spies
Her Babes to seek and slay ;
So, one by one, before her eyes,
They perished in a day.

Her ancient friends and comforters—
In vain they gather round :
Despairing anguish deep as hers,
Their plummet cannot sound.

Where lie in that long, hopeless sleep,
Her lovely martyred dead,
Should Rachel ever cease to weep ?
Or e'er be comforted ?

No ! all her being answers, No ;
But from this bitter day,
She to those little graves will go,
And weep her life away.¹

¹ Matthew ii. 16-18.

III.

Born to Die.

I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, and nothing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him.—Ecclesiastes iii. 14.

THE infant life so fair, so frail,
 So flickering its flame,
 Brief as its own first helpless wail—
 Had it no useful aim ?

No public scope ? no broad intent ?
 No lofty end to aid ?
 And was it only hither sent
 To suffer and to fade ?

Believe it not. Whate'er occurs,
 Earth's peopled surface o'er,
 Leaves some immortal spirit worse,
 Or better than before.

God is the Sire of souls ; and each ¹
 Exerts a power sublime,
 To fashion human lives, and reach
 The farthest bounds of time.

¹ Hebrews xii. 9.

The Babe that but survives to breathe
A feeble cry of pain,
Then swoons into the hush of Death—
He has not lived in vain.

Stopped on the threshold of his years,
That one complaining cry
Awakes an echo in the spheres,
That never more will die.

To brothers, kindred, neighbours, friends,
Through all the years to be,
The deathless influence extends,
And clasps eternity.

IV.

It is Well !

Is it well with the child? . . . It is well.—2 Kings iv. 26.

WHERE TO have those swift pilgrims passed,
Those infant-spirits fair?
Be not my destiny, at last,
Appointed elsewhere!

Sweet Innocents! a little while
Ye visited the Earth;
Then, where your happy Angels smile,
Ye had your better birth.

Ye came a short-lived joy to give,
 To feel a transient pain ;
 An everlasting life to live,
 Where life no more is vain :

To leave in two fond hearts, a space
 For heavenly peace to fill ;
 Even so, O Father, God of grace !
 For, was it not Thy will ?¹

They droop, your lovely forms to miss ;
 They weep, but ye are blest :
 Where all is innocence and bliss,
 Rest, happy spirits, rest.

V.

free Grace.

They got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them : but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them.—Psalm xlii. 3.

FROM Wisdom's painful wells, they drew
 No slow-increasing lore ;
 Yet have they now more knowledge true,
 Than all the wise of yore.

¹ Matthew xi. 26.

They trod not tired and travel-stained
The narrow way, oppressed
With doubts and fears ; yet have they gained
The welcome inn of rest.

They voyaged not with tattered shrouds
Across the ocean wide ;
Yet, safe from winds and threatening clouds,
They in the haven ride. •

Their strength no wasting labour wore,
In Summer's burning heat ;
Their shoulders never burden bore,
Yet their repose is sweet.

They brake no glebe, no seed they sowed,
They laid no darnel low ;
No watch they kept, no harvest mowed,
And yet their barns o'erflow. •

They bare no sword, no glory sought
By deeds of daring done ;
No ghostly enemy they fought,
Yet is the victory won.

No heavy cross, no open shame,
E'er bowed their spirits down ;
Yet, through the ever-blesséd Name,
They wear a glorious crown.

VI.

The Freed Captives.

The Lord hath sent Me . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.
—Isa. lxii. 1.

I saw a silent, captive bird,
And set the prisoner free :
Then, a delicious song I heard
Pour from the poplar tree.

I found—by thoughtless hands secured,
A luckless child of air,
Within a case of glass immured,
And stood to watch it there.

Like some poor fisher's single sail,
Its folded wings appeared,
As round about its casket frail,
It swayed, and tacked, and veered.

Its prison door I opened wide,
Still standing heedful by ;
When forth there sprung, in joyous pride
A gorgeous butterfly.

And such, I said, our Children are :
From durance vile set free,
Through the blithe air they range afar,
In glorious liberty.

VII.

Good in Evil.

*Come and let us return unto the Lord : for He hath torn,
and He will heal us ; He hath smitten, and He will bind us
up.—Hosea vi. 1.*

THE Florist, as he plies his art
Around the Autumn bowers,
His favourite plants will cut, and part,
To multiply the flowers.

The storm that wrecks the forest, flings
The acorns down to Earth ;
Which folds them in her breast, and brings
A million oaks to birth.

The griefs whereby our hearts are riven,
Which leave us torn and bare,
Remove our little ones to Heaven,
To root and flourish there.

And all the ills that scourge, or try,
 By men misunderstood,
 Appear to Wisdom's prescient eye,
 The vehicles of good.¹

VIII.

Magor-Missabib.

The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends.—Jeremiah xx. 3, 4.

ALAS for Herod ! not for those
 In Rama timeless slain :
 Their joy nor change nor period knows ;
 His spirit shall have pain.

O Rachel ! sadder thoughts than thine,
 Shall haunt his hoary hairs ;
 For him record the scrolls Divine,
 A direr doom than theirs.

Through blood the Martyrs win a bliss
 The murderer cannot find :
 A terror to himself he is,
 A terror to his kind.

¹ Romans viii. 28.

They live, the Mercy to adore
Which suffered them to die :
He dies for ever, to deplore
The Fate that passed him by.

The Victims, on the heavenly plains,
Thy wished-for coming wait :
The Tyrant, wailing and in chains,
Shall pass the ebon gate.

IX.

“Who Hath Woes?”

Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.—Luke xii. 4.

ALAS, for those in Tophet old,
Who raised the funeral pyre !¹
Not for the babes ! To streets of gold,
They passed through gates of fire.

Alas, for India’s callous sons,
Their sacred stream beside !
Not for their helpless little ones,
Who struggle with the tide.

¹ Jeremiah vii. 31.

Woe to the Murderer timely slain
In Bosworth's glorious hour !¹
Not to the guiltless Princes twain,
Who sleep beneath The Tower.

Woe, woe to her whose wasted life
In Pleasure's vortex lost,
Degrades the names of Mother, Wife,
Fair Woman's proudest boast !

Not for her Child, who longing lies
To hear upon the stairs
Her tardy feet ; and lives, and dies,
Without a Mother's prayers.

For Hell its dismal doors must close
Behind the slaves of Sin ;
But Heaven its gates wide open throws,
To take their Children in.

¹ Richard III.

X.

Rachel Comforted.

But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel.—Micah v. 2.

“THY Children, by the Tyrant slain—
Weep not their timeless doom ;
For they shall all return again,
Immortal, from the tomb.”¹

To Rachel came this word of cheer,
Like music from above ;
Glad tidings of a Saviour near,
A Father’s deathless love.

And ere the Foe had lifted knife,
One Babe of hers to kill,
Appeared at hand the Lord of Life,
The promise to fulfil.

From Rama old, across the wild,
Before the morning breaks,
A Virgin with her new-born Child
The way to Egypt takes.²

¹ Jeremiah xxxi. 16, 17. ² Matthew ii. 13, 14.

The tramp of Herod's troops they fly,
 By their good Angel led :
 That Babe Divine shall live, to die,
 And bring to life the dead !

XI.

The Star of Bethlehem.

Search the Scriptures ; for . . . they are they that testify of Me.
 —John v. 39.

FROM East to West the Magi sped,
 Through field and flood afar,
 To seek their Saviour's manger-bed,
 Safe-guided by His Star.¹

Had He not made another light,
 The firmament to grace,
 Not all the countless lamps of Night
 Had showed His natal place.

Full well to them the orbs were known
 That heaven's vast vault be-gem ;
 Yet never Star the way had shown
 That led to Bethlehem.

¹ Matthew ii. 1, 2.

Look not, if thou wouldest see the Sun,
When he resigns his reign ;
For Night might blend her lights in one,
To show his face, in vain.

Thy Saviour-Lord wouldest thou behold,
His work and way explore ?
Then, hear His “holy men” of old,
Or err for evermore.¹

Thy wisdom is an idle flame,
Which lures with wildering spell,
To paths that end in fear, and shame,
And darkness visible.

God only can reveal the way
To His sublime abode ;
As Bethlehem’s Star, in Rachel’s day,
The road to Bethlehem showed.

By endless disappointments crossed,
We wander, far astray ;
Till He who seeks and saves the lost,
Himself points out the way.

¹ 2 Peter i. 21.

XII.

“Of Such is The Kingdom.”

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Matthew xviii. 3.

OH, Rachel! weep not, as for those
Who better were unborn :
They rest in hope, as shuts the rose
To bloom again at morn.

They never were to sin enticed,
They knew no hate or pride ;
They never spurned Thy love, O Christ !
Or scorned Thy suffering Bride.

And can they be in death disowned—
These new Immortals small,
By Him whose precious Death atoned
For all the sins of All ?

They die in Adam : in the Lord
They live, no more to die.
To purity and peace restored,
They dwell above the sky.

From Heaven to Earth He stooped, to be
Like them, a Babe of Days :
To Manhood grown, He smiled to see
Their little winsome ways.

Their heads He honoured with His touch,
To them His grace was given ;
And Such, said He, and only Such,
Are the Beloved of Heaven.¹

XIII.

“Their Angels.”

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.—Matthew xviii. 10.

AN Angel-Guard, each Babe to watch,
Attends with sleepless care ;
Its weak, unconscious cries to catch,
And render into prayer.

Those buried Babes their Angels kept¹,
Throughout their little day ;
And bore, when they at evening slept,
On radiant wings away.

¹ Mark x. 14 ; Matthew xviii. 2, 3.

Their Guides they lived not to forsake,
 Or let the blessing slip ;
 To grieve those Spirits pure, or break
 The holy fellowship.¹

And with their Angels they appear,
 From every danger free ;
 With vision as the eagle's clear,
 The Father's face to see.

XIV.

A Horrid Creed.

They shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.—Jeremiah xxxi 29.

I READ that all conceived in sin,
 Have life through One who died :²
 They only fail His grace to win,
 Who thrust His love aside.

Yet some a creed of horror hold—
 Believe it, ye who can :
 That ever-living flames enfold
 Poor Infants of a span.

¹ Ecclesiastes v. 6.

² 1 Corinthians xv. 22.

That He who died the curse to bear
Of thieves, and murderers gray,
Abandons millions to despair,
Who never went astray.

That they must burn, with Demons quelled,
Predestined thereunto ;
Like fruitless trees untimely felled,
Which but for burning grew.¹

That thus the Rule of Faith declares
The perfect will Divine !
My Bible, God ! can it be theirs ?
Or their Redeemer, mine ?

XV.

“A Great Multitude.”

I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits ; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.—Romans xi. 25.

“I saw a countless multitude,
Of every land and tongue,
Who round the Throne of Glory stood :”
So John in Patmos sung.²

¹ Matthew iii. 10.

² Revelation vii. 9.

Who are those untold numbers, say—
 Who, but the early dead ?
 “ The many choose the broader way ; ”
 So Christ of Nazareth said.¹

It stands, they say, in ciphered scrolls,
 That, from one father sprung,
 Full thrice ten thousand million souls
 Have lived since Time was young ;

And that of all that e'er had birth,
 Since our first father fell,
 One half return to Mother Earth,
 Ere they seven Winters tell.

We ask, as clank the chains of Sin
 On thousands trooping by,
 “ Lord ! are they few Thy grace who win ? ”
 And fear the slow reply.²

But we the arithmancy allow,
 And see John’s vision clear ;
 Since thrice five thousand millions now
 Before the Throne appear !

All these the rapt Apostle saw,
 With millions Gospel-taught ;
 And millions more, without the Law,
 By Conscience thither brought.³

¹ Matthew vii. 13, 14. ² Luke xiii. 23, 24.
³ Romans ii. 14-16.

Of every nation, people, tribe,
From coming woe they sped ;
And all to Him their bliss ascribe
Who suffered in their stead.¹

XVI.

*Hell.*²

PART FIRST.

A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.—Job x. 22.

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming : it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth. . . . All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we ? art thou become like unto us ?—Isaiah xiv. 9, 10.

WEARY and worn with travel long,
Oppressed with anxious care,
Heartsick with scenes of Sin and Wrong
Which met me everywhere,

And pining from a grief profound
Fresh-weeping through the years,
As closed the evening shadows round,
With many shapeless fears,

¹ Revelation v. 9.

² O ! much I fear the mountain-path to miss,
If from my sight I lose the gulf below.

Lyra Innocentium.

In a dark wood whose branches through
Nor moon nor starlight beamed,
Alone, remote from public view,
I lay me down and dreamed.

With recent rain, slow-dropping, leaked
My thousand-pillared house :
Tossed by the fitful nightwinds, creaked
The matted forest-boughs.

Fox, bittern, screech-owl, raven lone,
Blent in one ceaseless scream ;
And everything around gave tone
And colour to my dream.

I saw a dark, dark path, which led
Down to the World of Woe :
Then spake a mighty Voice, that said,
“ Arise, and thither go ;

“ And set thine eyes straight on, intent
To track thy certain Guide ! ”
So I arose, and thither went,
And never turned aside.

Led onward by a lurid flame,
O'er many a fell, and moor,
And swollen rivulet, I came
To Dante's dreadful door.

Shuddering, the awful words I read,
Addressed to men of sin;¹
Yet spake the Voice again, and said,
“Approach, and enter in !

“Explore those vaults and valleys drear,
Their mysteries keep in mind ;
And who are not, and who are here,
Proclaim to all mankind.”

In thunders dread—might wake the dead,
The ponderous knocker fell ;
The door swung wide, and with my Guide,
Unscathed, I entered Hell.

Its plains I paced with wistful care,
Their mysteries kept in mind ;
And who were not, and who were there,
I publish to mankind.

By a black river’s brim I strayed,
Which weltered sadly by ;
Wherein was no reflection made,
Of mountain, tree, or sky.

Where’er I turned, beneath my feet
The glebe was scorched and bare ;
Nor bird might sing, nor goat might bleat,
In that pernicious air.

¹ All hope abandon ye who enter here.—*Carly.*

O'er smoking plain, on flaming hill,
 In sevenfold heated den,
 I saw—what haunts my memory still,
 Ten thousand hoary men.

Here, Nimrod, o'er the smouldering glade,
 Was chased by hounds of Hell :¹
 There, fretted the intriguing Shade
 Of sage Ahithophel.

I knew him by the knotted cord,
 That down his shoulders hung ;²
 And much he spake, but all abhorred
 The counsel of his tongue.

Here, Laban, Nabal, and a host
 Likeminded, fumed alway ;
 There, wailed the wicked Prophet's ghost,
 Who led his friend astray.³

Here, impotently stormed the King—
 The Child-King's earliest foe,
 Who made old Rama's valleys ring
 With Rachel's cureless woe.

There, fifty Popes together strove,
 For Hell's pontificate ;
 Who changed, on earth, the Law of Love
 Into a law of hate.

¹ Genesis x. 8, 9. ² 2 Samuel xvii. 23. ³ 1 Kings xiii. 18.

And round about, on every side,
Each by his Demon driven,
Were all the Eld who lived and died
At enmity with Heaven.

Some knew I, in my earlier times,
To boast their evil might,
And tell me of their youthful crimes
With devilish delight.

Nor is it to their teaching due,
That I am not as they :
Now, vainly seeking listeners new,
They eat their hearts away.

All ills beneath our changeful skies,
Pent in one lazaret wide,
Would make a blissful Paradise,
That doleful land beside.

Together, kindred sprites, they herd,
Each alien to all ;
With none to speak one soothing word,
A hopeless hospital—

Blind, deaf, decrepit, stooping, scarred—
All their old ills enlarged ;
Palsied, asthmatic, breathing hard
The air with sulphur charged.



And each, by all the rest assailed,
Slow hirpling o'er the plain,
His three-score years of sin bewailed,
In lasting penance vain.

PART SECOND.

And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not diminish ought from your bricks of your daily task.—Exodus v. 19.

THESE, on the Left were far outspread,
Along the dismal shore,—
Again the Voice spake o'er my head,
“ Yon steamy vale explore ! ”

I reached a Valley, broad and deep,
That with hot vapours steamed.
Here, turbid rills, from mountains steep,
In boiling fulness streamed—

From subterraneous caldrons urged,
More than in Thames are found ;
Yet to no Sea their lines converged,
But sank into the ground.

Lamenting myriads here I saw,
In Manhood's middle day ;
Who bowed to Nature's utmost law,
Before their locks were gray.

With giant hate, with pigmy might,
On Earth they madly strove,
Against the everlasting Right,
And the unbounded Love.

For this, for evermore they toil,
Close-guarded, making bricks :
No breeze to cool the seething soil,
No straw to intermix.

In that dank clime, one brick to make,
All finite skill would fail ;
Yet must they fashion them, and bake,
And render in full tale.

Here toiled the Traitor without hope,
Who brought the Lord to shame :
I knew him by his broken rope,
And by his mangled frame.¹

Proud Haman, by like token known,
His mad ambition wept ;²
And nigh, with many a hollow groan,
God-smote, Agrippa crept.³

¹ Acts i. 18. ² Esther vii. 10. ³ Acts xii. 21-23.

He who the kingdom rent in twain,
 And held the greater half,
 And Israel bound, in worship vain,
 To Egypt's wanton calf,¹

Assayed in vain a brick to mould ;
 For still the stubborn clay,
 Came out like those same hoofs of gold
 That led his feet astray.

Hard by, reeled Elah, as when, "drunk,"
 At Arza's board he died,
 And unto swift perdition sunk ;
 With Zimri at his side.³

I Omri, Ahab, Amon knew ;
 And some who lately fell,
 In mid career of crime, and drew
 Large following to Hell.

Our own last-crowned Plantagenet,
 And second Tudor, here
 I found ; and, false and foolish yet,
 A row of Stuarts near.

And, mingling with this crew accursed,
 Of wretched, not a few—
 On Earth the fairest and the worst,
 All weird and grisly grew.

.. ¹ 1 Kings xii. 25-30.

² 1 Kings xvi. 8-10.

These once had power mankind to charm,
And make dull Care rejoice ;
But here I found no jewelled arm,
Fair face, or pleasant voice.

Here, Zorek's bonnibel, who scorned
Her doting husband's weal—¹
There, Micah's wretched mother mourned,
Who taught her son to steal.²

And near them, Job's unnatural wife,³
Zeresh and Jezebel ;⁴
Herodias, too, of rancid life,⁵
Who reared her child for Hell.

Here bloody Mary Tudor slaved,
By brazen chains enthralled ;
And evermore of Smithfield raved,
And still for Bonner called.

Yet Bonner came not at her call,
But writhed afar in pain,
With some who sought this realm to enthrall,
In Queen Victoria's reign.

Some I beheld, whom once I hoped
To meet in upper air ;
And some; in evil timely stopped,
O joy ! were absent there.

¹ Judges xvi. 17-21. ² Judges xvii. 1, 2. ³ Job xix. 17.
⁴ Esther v. 14 ; 1 Kings xxi. 25. ⁵ Matthew xiv. 3, 4.

Ah me ! to see, with lifted scourge,
A red-eyed, fiery carl,
Keep watch, their hopeless work to urge,
Among that simmering marl ;

Who, ever, when for straw they cried,
Or dared relief to ask,
“ Nay, ye are idle ! ” fierce replied,
And drove them to their task.

PART THIRD.

He that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done ; and there is no respect of persons.—Colossians iii. 25.

AGAIN the Voice above my head
Cried, “ Turn thee to the Right ;
And climb where burns the beacon red,
Upon yon mountain height.”

I looked, and through the torrid air,
Where never bird could fly,
Beheld afar a dismal glare,
Flash midway from the sky.

Then, from the Valley, to the Right
My willing feet I turned ;
And stopped not till I made the height
Where that red beacon burned.

Endued with more than mortal strength,
I made the steep ascent ;
And when the top I reached at length,
The guiding flame was spent,—

Lest others, from the Vale of Steam,
The wished-for way should know ;
Nor needed I its guiding gleam,
This loftier land to show :

For lighter was the sky, and less
The gloom that hung around,
Than aggravated their distress
Who held the lower ground.

To theirs, this better climate was
As Egypt is to Ind :
Here stunted trees, low corn, coarse grass,
Waved in the cooler wind.

Yet, though more fresh and fair to see,
Plain, hillock, wood, and dell,
Extending to immensity,
All bore the stamp of Hell.

A mournful train of women wan,
 Arrayed in saintly weeds,
 Here—moving slowly on, and on,
 Bewailed their sinful deeds.

“Now mark,” the Voice majestic said,
 “This sad procession well ;
 Through God’s own temple these were led,
 By priestly pride to Hell.

“For all their sins against High Heaven—
 Done in the light of day,
 They only sought to be forgiven
 By sinners worse than they :

“Vain men, a proud, presumptuous race,
 Who, by truth-seeming lies,
 Themselves exalt into the place
 Of God who justifies :¹

“Who enter houses, by the force
 Of sacerdotal wile ;
 And to destruction, scores and scores,
 Of women-folk beguile.”²

I marked them well ; and, evermore,
 With agonizing plea,
 Their Ghostly Fathers they implore
 From guilt to set them free.

¹ Romans viii. 33.

² 2 Timothy iii. 5, 6.

But still no Ghostly Fathers come,
To climb these envied slopes ;
For some with Bonner writhe, and some
Gasp, with the wrinkled Popes.

And it is meet that they who dared
Usurp the Throne of God—
Through all eternity unspared,
Shall bear His heaviest rod.¹

A thousand pensive striplings here,
All weary, pale, and thin,
Delve through the everlasting year,
Earth's kindly fruits to win.

Some climb the trees, the fruits to cull
In ruby rinds encased ;
Yet are they but of ashes full,
And mock the eager taste.

Some till the ground, some sow, some reap,
The shocks some homeward trail ;
The harvest some with patience heap,
Some thresh it with the flail.

Yet no repose their travail knows,
Their toil no guerdon meet ;
Instead of barley cockle grows,
And tares instead of wheat.

¹ Isaiah xlvi. 11.

Some through the tangled covers roam,
In vain pursuit of game ;
Some timber fell, and fetch it home,
For other hands to claim.

Some for themselves a dwelling pile,
Of beams, and arching boughs :
Anon, a Demon-band despoil,
And raze the finished house.

Some, staggering under heavy loads,
Ascend the slippery steep ;
Pursued by Fiends, with sharpened goads,
Who mock them as they weep.

I saw among them slowly come,
And gain the mountain-crown,
Lewd Amnon, treacherous Absalom,
Both Princes of renown.¹

Like wolves, by weeks of want made bold,
They strove, and backwards fell ;
And down the steep black mountain rolled,
Even to the nether Hell :

Again to climb the hill with pain,
And groans, and weary pace ;
Again to grapple, and again,
Roll headlong to the base.

¹ 2 Samuel xiii. 28, 29.

The delvers in this upper close,
By lighter ills assailed,
Were not so sunk in Sin as those
Who that steep mountain scaled.

They heeded not the gracious Guide,
Who still their welfare sought ;
But, for Earth's pleasures, Christ denied,
Who their salvation bought.

The others, not alone despised
Their dying Lord in Time ;
But hated Truth, and Error prized,
And added crime to crime.

And some, I saw with sad surprise,
Clomb evermore astray ;
For ravens had pecked out their eyes,
Nor could they find the way.¹

Now, downwards, by a slanting path,
I sought the outer gate ;
And some I met inflamed with wrath,
And others swollen with hate.

Then, through the anguish-laden air,
I heard a Damsel say,
“Where is my Mother? Tell me, Where?
I seek her all the day !

¹ Proverbs xxx. 17.

“ The Prophet’s head she bade me ask,
This lordly dish upon ;¹
And I have well performed my task—
Where is my Mother gone !

“ The horrid gift I scarce can lift,
These eyes I cannot bear :
So good, so true, they pierce me through—
Where are you, Mother ? Where ? ”

PART FOURTH.

*Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them
lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be
filled.—John xvii. 12.*

HEARTSICK, I down the mountain sped,
In sorrow and affright.
Again the Voice spake overhead,
And stopped my trembling flight :

Then I bethought me, that where'er
My wandering steps had been,
Through all the regions of despair,
No Children I had seen.

Then, calm and comfortful, the Voice
Rung in my listening ears ;
It bade my bursting heart rejoice,
And scattered all my fears :

“These hills, those plains, yon valley dim,
No Infant souls contain ;
Death-struck, they ever live with Him
Who was for sinners slain.

“They only in these torments writhe,
Who His salvation scorn ;
Not half a tithe of half a tithe,
Of all to Adam born.

“Think not Hell’s hate of greater might
Than Heaven’s redeeming grace :
The Lamb must triumph in the fight,
And save the ransomed race.”¹

As thus to me distressed, afraid,
The Voice in music spoke,
The comfort to my soul I laid,
And overjoyed, awoke.

¹ Revelation xvii. 14.

Past were the melancholy hours,
In glory shone the day :
A thousand joyous woodland flowers
Were blooming where I lay.

It was the year's full-blossomed Spring,
And in that dome of firs,
Sang merry birds of every wing,
Like temple choristers.

In the dark pine above my head,
Two gentle turtle-doves,
Like Peace to musing Memory wed,
Declared their holy loves.

• XVII.

The Cemetery.

Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.—Isaiah xxvi. 9.

I PACE this recent Burial-ground,
To scent its breathing blooms ;
And start, surprised, to see around
So many tiny tombs.

Some I perceive of greater length,
In groups outlying near ;
For youth, and age, and manhood's strength,
Together slumber here.

Some, long beset with hard mishap,
All unresisting fell :
Reluctant some, from Fortune's lap,
Came with the Dead to dwell.¹

The man of peace, the man of strife,
Are sleeping side by side.
Where are they ? All unknown in life,
I know not how they died.

Upon those lettered stones to seek
Their destinies, were vain :
By blind affection writ, they speak,
To me, no language plain.

But they who fill these smaller graves,
Repose in hope secure ;
Each blade of grass that o'er them waves,
Proclaims their calling sure.

And when the final trump shall sound,
When Time has passed away,
Shall spring from every little mound
A glorious Heir of Day.

¹ Job xxi. 23-26.

XVIII.

Recompense.

Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.—I Corinthians iii. 8.

“THEY shall not build, and not possess ;
 Or plant, and not enjoy :
 Trees, rooted well in righteousness,
 The Foe may not destroy.

“The crooked share, no more in vain
 Shall vex the fruitful Earth ;
 No blasted work shall give them pain,
 And no abortive birth.”¹

To Abraham’s chosen suffering seed,
 So spake the Sovereign Voice,
 O troubled Saints, give thoughtful heed !
 O stricken souls, rejoice !

Ye shall inhabit that ye build ;
 Ye plant, and ye shall eat :
 In the New Earth, your days fulfilled,
 Your Children ye shall meet.

¹ Isaiah lxv. 22-25.

By stern Affliction rocked to rest,
Close curtained by the grave,
They shall arise and call you blessed,
Who them to Glory gave.

Then shall the lion and the ox
In pastures green be fed ;
And harmless wolves with fearless flocks,
By Little Children led.

XIX.

Sympathy.

So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him : for they saw at his grief was very great.—Job ii. 13.

ONE saith, “ The broken heart’s distress
A stranger cannot know ; ”¹
Yet may he share its bitterness,
And help its tears to flow.

When Lazarus died, his Sisters wept ;
And from Jerusalem,
To where the loved of Jesus slept,
Came friends to comfort them.²

¹ Proverbs xiv. 10.

John xi. 19.

And it is better to be found
Where stricken souls resort,
Than in the halls with gladness crowned,
Where Pleasure keeps her court.¹

I come but to condole, for God
Alone, hath comfort true ;
But let me, on the sacred sod,
Just weep awhile with you.

His hand hath likewise touched my breast,
And left a want profound ;
Though, save One Little Lamb at rest,
My flock still bleat around.

But safer, happier far, than they
Still nibbling on the wold,
Is he who feasts with Christ to-day,
In the eternal fold.

Yet hath he left an empty place,
Whereto he ne'er returns ;
A heart unfilled, a yawning space,
Which throbs, and aches, and yearns.

¹ Ecclesiastes vii. 2-4.

XX.

The Lost Lamb.

He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom.—Isaiah xl. 11.

ONE morning, from their peaceful fold,
A flock was gently driven,
To pasture on the distant wold,
And come again at even.

But one weak lambkin lagged behind ;
And on the breezy height,
The dam her wanderer strove to find,
And mourned for him till night.

Then, homeward driven with weary feet,
And lamentation great,
She leapt, in sudden joy, to meet
Her lost one at the gate.

The master-shepherd walked abroad
That morning, with his men ;
Beheld the straggler on the road,
And brought him home again.

Like agony my breast hath torn,
 Such hap my path has crossed ;
 As I my flock led forth at morn,
 A little Lamb I lost.

But him the Master found, and bare
 In His warm bosom home ;
 And He, with all a Shepherd's care,
 Will keep him, till I come.¹

In vain I seek him on the wold,
 But he, as sets the sun,
 To bleat my welcome to the fold,
 Will to the portal run.

XXI.

A Bird of Paradise.

The glorious liberty of the children of God.—Romans viii. 21.

To me a lovely gift was sent,
 A Bird of Paradise.²
 Within a narrow cage was pent
 My sweet, unwilling prize ;

¹ Philippians i. 23.

² As if to show what creatures heaven doth breed.—*Milton.*

And beautiful, beyond compare,
Were bird and fragile cage ;
But yet of strength unmeet, to bear
The elemental rage.

The morn o'erpowered his tender form,
The evening chilled his frame ;
He cowered before the wintry storm,
He drooped in Summer's flame.

Nought homelike could he hear or see,
All sights, all sounds were strange ;
He struggled wildly to get free,
His native woods to range.

He raised his voice but to complain ;
And piteous were his cries,
The ever-blooming bowers to gain,
And comrades in the skies.

He beat his cage with restless wings,
He broke the feeble bars ;
And now, melodiously he sings,
Away—beyond the stars.

O, then, to see him upward sail,
I watched, with streaming eyes !
Yet left he a long, lingering trail
Of glory through the skies.



So did I lose the treasure given,
 Nor would I have him back ;
 But follow to the fields of Heaven,
 By that same sapphire track.

XXII.

“ I Could not Say.”

*These daughters are my daughters, and these children are
 my children . . . and what can I do this day unto these
 my daughters, or unto their children which they have borne ?*
 —Genesis xxxi. 43.

HADST thou survived, I might have said,
 “ This I will give,” and “ This ;”
 But could not say, “ Thou shalt be led
 In ways of perfect bliss.”

I could not say, “ From pain and woe,
 Thy childhood I will keep ;
 Thou no iniquity shalt sow,
 No vanity shalt reap.”

I could not say, “ Henceforth thy days
 Of suffering are o'er :
 Here, take to thee the robes of praise,
 For thou shalt weep no more.”

I could not say, “A victor’s palm,
A kingdom, I will give ;
Thee I will bring to endless calm,
And thou in Heaven shalt live.”

All this I could not say ; but now,
The King, whom I shall see,
With ‘many crowns’ upon His brow,
Hath said and done, for thee.

XXIII.

Alone and not Alone.

*There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain
the spirit ; neither hath he power in the day of death : and
there is no discharge in that war.—Ecclesiastes viii. 5.*

*How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan ?—Jeremiah
xii. 5.*

ALONE he could not walk, and yet,
Unaided and alone,
The Conqueror of Kings he met,
That Empires hath o’erthrown.

Alone He braved the sable flood,
And in the billows sank ;
But not alone He rose, and stood
Upon the further bank.

With vision purged, with steady feet,
He made the immortal side ;
In spotless white arrayed, to meet
His unseen Angel-Guide.

XXIV.

Seeking a Burial-Place.

Give me a possession of a burial place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.—Genesis xxiii. 4.

I SOUGHT what I had seen before ;
But, though the well-known place,
No melancholy aspect wore,
I went with tardy pace.

Sweet flowers, fair evergreens, tall trees,
Lured to the sacred spot,
Youths, maids, glad birds, and happy bees ;
And yet I hastened not.

A mountain-load my breast enclosed,
That weighed me down like lead ;
For, underneath, the Dead reposed,
And my Beloved was dead.

XXV.

The funeral.

There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest.—Job iii. 17.

WE bore him through the smoky Town,
Along the busy streets ;
Where Mammon holds his vile renown,
Displays his wares, and cheats.

The near and certain end of all
Our silence preached aloud ;¹
Yet scarce a sigh the frequent pall
Awakened in the crowd.

Alas ! that men their years allow
In vain pursuits to flee ;
And in their little noisy Now,
Forget their vast To-Be.

We bore him up the winding lanes,
Beyond the tedious Town ;
And laid, where Death his court maintains,
The precious burden down.

¹ Ecclesiastes vii. 2.

Within a deep and spacious cave,
We made his lasting bed ;
Where breezes play, and branches wave
Above the quiet Dead.

We reared a stone, and writ his name
Beneath the spreading tree ;
And thus that holy place became
For ever dear to me.

XXVI.

Waiting.

All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.—Job xiv. 14.

THE day and night—They come, and pass ;
The moons—They wax, and wane :
But, to my fond embrace, alas !
He cometh not again.

There, on the cypress-covered hill,
Above the City's roar,
He sleeps, and waketh not, until
The heav'ns are no more.

But when the heavens no more shall be,
When Time hath passed away,
I shall my own in Glory see,
And have, and hold, for aye.

XXVII.

“Fred.”

Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?—Job xxx. 25.

As from the closing grave we sped,
This record met my eyes :—
“Here, loved, lamented, Little Fred
In expectation lies.”

And is *he* gone? And who was he?
Alas, I cannot tell!
His weeping Sire I ne'er may see,
And yet I love him well.

Our Children met not till they died ;
But now, through all the years,
They sweetly slumber side by side,
Till that last morn appears.

Is Fred thy son, oh ! tell me, thou
 Who readst my hopeful lay ?
 Then let us weep together now ;
 And wait the coming day !

XXVIII.

David's Colours.

The wicked is driven away in his wickedness.—Proverbs xiv. 32.

WHAT time Bathsheba's Infant Child
 In strong convulsions lay,
 His royal Sire, in passion wild,
 Lamented night and day.

Yet did his sorrow cease to flow,
 When all, in Death, was o'er ;
 " For I," he said, " to him shall go,
 Though he return no more ! " ¹

What time Maächah's wilful heir
 Before his Maker went,
 With grief, and horror, and despair,
 His Father's heart was rent.

¹ 2 Samuel xii. 15-23.

“ Oh Absalom, my Son !” he cried ;
“ Unmeet, to Judgment gone !
Would God that I for thee had died,
 Oh Absalom, my Son !”¹

The guiltless Babe from ills to come
 Was snatched, with God to be :
The rebel Youth to righteous doom
 Was cast, and, Where is he ?

Oh ! it is better to bemoan
 Ten lovely Infants dead,
Than One for whom is darkness sown,
 And snares and death are spread.

XXIX.

The Erring.

I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be : for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.—Deuteronomy xxxii. 20.

OH ! weep not for the early Dead,
 Nor loud their fate bemoan :
To Glory they by Love are led,
 A kingdom, and a throne.

¹ 2 Samuel xviii. 33.



Friends are the perfume of the way,
And theirs the evil days.

At balmy eve, and dewy morn,
And sultry noon, weep sore ;
Lest they, like him to Egypt borne,¹
Come back in peace no more.

They roam o'er mountains dark, to meet
Unnumbered dangers there :
Oh ! follow all those wandering feet,
In sorrow and in prayer.

XXX.

At Court.

*Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ?—
Jeremiah xxiii. 30*

His face—so bright, his form—so fair,
When he departed hence,
Shall meet me, grown and ripened there,
To perfect excellence.

His voice of music rich and clear,
That nevermore will tire,
I shall with joy in Glory hear,
Amid the temple-choir.

He spake not, save in moanings faint ;
But now, his harp of gold
He handles, like the practised Saint,
Who died a century old.

And when the years have glided by,
He to that world of bliss,
Will bid me welcome, even as I
Once welcomed him to this.¹

¹ Thou art to me a parent now,
And I a child to thee.—*Thomas Ward.*

XXXI.

Heaven.

PART FIRST.

Get you up ; . . . and see the land, what it is.—Numbers xiii. 17, 18.

I HAD a vision yesternight :
To me an Angel flew,
And bore me to a world of light,
Above the mountains blue.

Above the clouds, above the sky,
Above the orbs of fire,
Swifter than Indian arrows fly,
We higher rose, and higher.

The World of Light before us shone,
A million leagues away ;
But on we hastened, ever on,
To gain its middle day.

He bore me through its dazzling sheen,
Its gates of glittering gold ;
Nor, till we reached its mountains green,
Did he his pinions fold.

Then, on a myrtle-covered hill,
He set me, all alone ;
Beside a little tinkling rill,
With flowers half-overgrown.

A thousand babbling rivulets leapt,
Clear from one central fount ;
A thousand stately cedars slept
Upon the neighbouring mount ;

A thousand birds sang overhead,
Of sweeter notes than ours ;
And far, on every side, outspread
A paradise of flowers.

With far-off music laden, played
The breezes breathing balm
Across the daisy-spangled glade,
In many a whispered psalm.

And over all a glory hung,
That on the senses fell,
In bliss, which even immortal tongue,
To mortal may not tell.

Through me, still wrapt in mortal clay,
Delicious languors crept ;
Nor could I confidently say,
Whether I woke or slept.

PART SECOND.

Then said he unto Zeba and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king.—Judges viii. 18.

Most strange, most wonderful, of all
That Poet ever dreamed,
The happy plains with figures small,
And tiny faces teemed.

They gambolled in the flowery meads,
They climb the grassy slopes ;
In roseate health which far exceeds
The fondest Parent's hopes.

Three hoary grandsires lingered here ;
Six sturdy fathers, there ;
Twelve blooming youths were wandering near ;
The Babes were everywhere :

Each with a wreath upon his brow,
Each with a harp supplied ;
All brighter, happier, wiser now,
Than when on Earth they died.

And One there was, O, passing fair !
And passing fair his place ;
I ran, to touch his golden hair,
And look into his face.

I scanned him with an earnest look,
And he that look returned ;
He spake to me, but, ere he spoke,
My heart within me burned.

On me his eyes so fondly hung,
So lovingly he smiled—
At once the mutual welcome rung,
“My Father !” “O, my Child !”

I mourned that my belovéd Boy
Saw but one passing moon ;
But now, I counted it a joy
That he had died so soon.

Long time had Sorrow filled my mind,
And shaded with her wing ;
But now, I joyed myself to find
The Father of a King.

PART THIRD.

*He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.—
Isaiah liii. 11.*

BENEATH a palm we sat retired—
My Royal Son, and I ;
While wonderingly I thus inquired,
And thus he made reply :

“ Have I, then, left the haunts of men,
And gained the blest abode ? ”
“ Yea ; but to go, and come again,
By the old, beaten road.

“ Yet think not, to thy bounded sight,
The Kingdom is revealed :
In Shires and Wapentakes of light,
From thy weak eyes concealed,

“ It stretches farther, ten times told,
Than your unequal Earth,
From the bleak coast of England old,
In all its travelled girth.

“ Each part is thronged as this, and each
As beautiful to see ;
But what is here disclosed, should teach
Some useful lore to thee.”

“ As beaten by a thousand storms,
Yet glorious to view,
Who are these venerable forms ?
And why are they so few ? ”

“ In Christ they lived, in Christ they died,
His foes, through life, they smote ;
And, by His favour, now they guide
Our Witenagemote.

“ The true, the humble, and the wise,
The loving, and the bold—
The honoured Patriarchs of the skies,
By thousands they are told.”

“ Of those in manhood’s mellowing prime,
Say, Why are there no more ? ”
“ The busy world forget, in Time,
The Presence at the door.

“ Content to make the earth their heaven,
They buy, and scheme, and fight :
By myriads is the number given,
Who reach this land of light.”

“They who in youth’s fresh springtide fell—
Is not their number great ? ”
“Alas ! too many did not well,
And missed the narrow gate.

“They trod the highway broad and fair,
That leadeth down to Hell ;
And many enter blindfold there,
With all the lost to dwell.

“Yet millions also here are seen,
And still their ranks increase,
In gardens gay, and valleys green,
And ivory palaces.

“Through life’s brief course, they faithful were
To their Baptismal Vows ;
And none more beautiful appear,
In all our Father’s house.

“Or, timely sorrowing for their sin,
They found the needful grace ;
And reached these happy plains, to win
A less illustrious place.”

“With glory crowned, in bright array,
Of more than mortal powers,
Those Little Children—Who are they,
That throng these blissful bowers ? ”

“Through His great love on whom were laid
Their suffering and their shame,
Ere sin deceived, or men betrayed,
From every land they came.

“On life’s rough sea a little space,
By varying fortunes tost,
Through all the ages—all the race,
No Little One is lost.

“For ever, now, in numbers more
Than mind may multiply,
They live, His goodness to adore,
Who deigned for them to die.”

PART FOURTH.

*Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross
despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the
throne of God.—Hebrews xii. 2.*

WHILE yet I marvelled that so few
Will barter Earth for Heaven,
A wondrous pageant met my view,
For my instruction given.

A countless host, of all degrees,
 Deployed before my eyes ;
 Now singly, now by twos and threes,
 Then by whole families.

Now, Children, all unknown to fame,
 With neither Parent nigh ;
 Then, Parents blest, though childless, came,
 And went rejoicing by.

With Abraham, Ishmael walked, restored
 By Abraham's anguished prayer ;¹
 With Isaac, Esau, for the Lord
 Was moved by his despair.²

Old Eli came with neither Son :
 Of all his fallen house,
 To share his glory there was none,
 Save Phinehas' faithful Spouse.³

On Job, his Sons and Daughters wait,
 From Satan's ire set free,⁴
 With songs of joy, in kingly state,
 A glorious company.

Attended by Bathsheba's Child,⁵
 The Minstrel-King drew near ;
 And sung a song, so sweet and wild,
 The Angels paused to cheer.

¹ Genesis xvii. 18.

³ 1 Samuel iv. 19-22.

⁵ 2 Samuel xii. 15-23.

² Genesis xxvii. 34.

⁴ Job i. 12, 18, 19.

I for his other Children sought,
I sought, but could not find :
If any were to Glory brought,
They travelled leagues behind.

With Lydia, and the faithful Dame
Whose Children walked in truth,¹
Their offspring all exulting came,
In everlasting youth.

And many whom on Earth I knew,
Whole households, there I found ;
All fair and beautiful to view,
And all with glory crowned.

Along the line a Presence passed,
Too bright for human gaze ;
And all their crowns before Him cast,
With shouts of rapturous praise.

Some, singly, yet exultant, cry,
“ Thy Ransomed Ones are we ! ”
But many sing, “ Lo, here am I,
And those Thou gavëst me ! ”²

Now rose the sound of heavy feet
To where, entranced, I lay ;
Of wheels, and voices in the street,
And all the din of day.

¹ 2 John 1, 4.

² Hebrews ii. 13.

So now the sweet enchantment broke,
The radiant forms withdrew ;
But, cheered and strengthened, I awoke,
To hold the vision true.

XXXII.

A World of Children.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.—I Corinthians xiii. 9, 10.

A WORLD of Children ! Is there ought
To charm mankind in this ?
In youth or manhood can the thought
Awaken dreams of bliss ?

“ What is the happiness it brings
To men of rank and worth—
The poets, sages, merchants, kings,
And heroes of the Earth ? ”

Compose that scornful lip upcurled,
Recall that judgment blind ;
And think of Heavén, as the world
Of pure, unfettered Mind.

For what are Children? Kings to-be,
Sages, of soul sublime;
To flourish in Eternity,
Though all unknown in Time.

Despise not God's own little ones,
Untimely snatched away;
For once Earth's proudest, noblest sons
And daughters were as they.

Ambition's dupe, of large desire,
The deep-read prescient Sage,
The Poet, with his soul of fire,
Brave manhood, reverend age—

All these, this blighted Earth has nursed.
Through weakness, toil, and pain,
By flesh restrained, by sin accursed,
To honour they attain.

But to the early dead, the gates
Of Science stand un-barred:
For them, immediate glory waits,
Which Heaven's strong bulwarks guard.

No sleep divides their active hours,
No lowborn creature-needs;
No sin impairs their nobler powers,
No load of flesh impedes.¹

¹ Revelation xxi. 25; xxii. 1-5.

They serve their Maker night and day,
Who never served His Foe ;
Can pardoned men such service pay,
Who served the flesh below ?

O, We a world of children are,
Bowed down with earthly things ;
And they, in glory brighter far,
God's minstrels, priests, and kings !

XXXIII.

The Conqueror.

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them.—Revelation xvii. 14.

GREAT was the might that men defiled,
And made the Earth, a grave !
But Mary's meek and gentle Child,
Is mightier to save.

He sought the Lion in his lair,
His cruel rage to quell ;
And back to God triumphant bear
The spoils of Death and Hell.

He lived and died, He rose and reigns,
He rescues half mankind :
A hopeful fight He yet maintains,
For millions left behind.

And all who dare His might oppose,
Shall own His rule complete ;
For He must reign, till all His foes
Are put beneath His feet.¹

O ! not in vain, my loving Lord,
Is shown Thy wondrous grace,
That, by the Water and the Word,
Restores our ransomed race.²

XXXIV.

Praise.

What shall I say ? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it : I will go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.—Isaiah xxxviii. 15, 16.

THANKS be to God, whose boundless love
His Son for sinners gave ;
And sent Him from His home above,
Our guilty World to save.

¹ 1 Corinthians xv. 24, 25. ² Ephesians v. 26.

For ever blessed be the Son,
 The Lamb on Calvary slain ;
 Who made our wretched case His own,
 And bore our curse and pain :

Whose words, rebuking timorous thought,¹
 Still fall like drops of balm,
 When Children to His house are brought,
 Our anxious souls to calm.

The Comforter be ever blest,
 Who strength and light imparts ;
 Gives to the weary pleasant rest,
 And heals our broken hearts.

Eternal honour, thanks, and praise,
 To our One God be paid ;
 By whom are noticed all our ways,
 And all our actions weighed :

Who casts us down, and lifts us up ;
 In darkness sets, and light ;
 Drains, and replenishes our cup ;
 Gives rest, and calls to fight :

Who takes away the gifts He sends—
 The bridegroom, or the bride,
 Sweet babes, fond parents, faithful friends,
 To draw us to His side.

¹ Mark x. 13, 14.

Let us go softly, God us aid !
Let us make praise and prayer ;
That we, when all things earthly fade,
May meet our kindred there.



SECOND BOOK.

The Nursery.

And she said, Oh my Lord, . . . I have lent him to the Lord ; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there.—I Samuel i. 26, 28.

Train up a child in the way he should go : and when he is old, he will not depart from it.—Proverbs xxiii. 6.

I.

Light in Darkness.

*And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds :
but the wind passeth and cleanseth them. Fair weather
cometh out of the North : with God is terrible majesty.—Job
xxxvii. 21, 22.*

THIS lesson every Saint must learn,
“ Submit yourselves to God ; ”¹
Yet Nature still His rule will spurn,
And rise against the rod.

We find in all that daunts the soul,
Nor motive nor design ;
Though Wisdom high directs the whole,
In harmony divine.

We fail in Sorrow’s changing moods,
To see the gracious Form
That rides upon the Summer floods,
And guides the Winter storm.²

We think, in all the ills that crowd
No latent good can be ;
Nor in the bursting thunder-cloud,
The Bow of Promise see.

¹James iv. 7. ²Psalm xxix. 3, 10.

Yet He who overspread the Earth
 With new-created light,
 Through all the ages still brings forth
 The morning from the night.¹

II.

Comforted.

*This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil
 of our hands.—Genesis v. 29.*

O YE ! sad Husband, weeping Wife,
 Grief-stricken, misery-crossed,
 To you there comes another Life,
 For those ye reckon lost.

Let mournful Memory learn to-day,
 Her anguish to forget :
 Let Hope her hand on Sorrow lay,
 And sing, “ Love reigneth yet ! ”

Let Lamech’s weary soul discern,
 In Noah his welcome rest ;²
 Let Mara from her grief return,
 To Naomi the blest.³

¹ Who from the night commands the shining day.—*Thomson.*

² Genesis v. 28, 29.

³ Ruth i. 20.

God said, "Let day be dark!" and Death
Enforced the stern decree :
" Let there be light!" again He saith ;
And shall not morning be ?

With thanks receive, with gladness hail,
The blessing from above ;
Give to that deathless being frail,
Your fondest, holiest love.

From Love outsprung, redeemed with blood,
From Earth and Death and Sin,
That Life, designed for during good,
Shall it in tears begin ?¹

As thrives a plant when Summer warms,
And gentle breezes kiss ;
So Youth discovers all its charms,
When all around is bliss.

Give light, give knowledge of the way
By all the happy trod ;
Give smiles, give joy, give healthful play,
And give her back to God.

¹ Sound, healthy children of the God of heaven,
Are cheerful as the rising sun in May.—*Wordsworth.*

III.

A Little Child.

Ye have no part in the Lord : so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord.—Joshua xxii. 25.

A LITTLE Child—Before him lies
The mystery of Life :
Soon will he learn its battle-cries,
And mingle in the strife.

Example-tutored, he will shape
His puppets after ours ;
And, haply, with Deception drape
His soul's expanding powers.

But now a charméd life he lives,
In Truth's own radiance bright ;
And trusts, and loves, and holds, and gives,
As Angels do in light.

While Love his happy home illumes,
No clouds his sky o'erspread :
To him no ray of sunshine comes,
When Love itself hath fled.

He gets to give, he owns to share,
Beloved, he loves the more;
Till men his moral sense impair,
And teach their darker lore.¹

IV.

The Dewdrop.

*My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as
ie dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the
owers upon the grass.—Deuteronomy xxxii. 2.*

THEY say, that when, at midnight hour,
Descends a drop of dew,
God-sent, Old Nile wakes up in power,
His empire to renew.

Kissed by that drop, his bosom heaves ;
He spreads abroad his hands,
And royal benediction leaves
With all his happy lands.

O, powerful Spirit of the Lord,
To raise the nature new,
To our sin-smitten Babes afford
One drop of sacred dew !

¹ In early days the conscience has in most
A quickness which in later life is lost.—*Cowper.*

Work in their hearts to will and do
The Father's holy will ;
That all their deeds with virtue true,
And heavenly life may thrill.

No longer earthy, of the earth,
Thy grace they then shall bless ;
Advancing from their better birth,
To years of holiness.

V.

The Sign of Grace.

Thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them : Sprinkle water of purifying upon them.—Numbers viii. 7.

“ SAY, Why baptizest thou, since all
Have life through One who died,
And they who, early-stricken, fall,
In certain bliss abide ?

“ What boots the Water, if the Blood
Of cleansing power Divine,
Restores each heathen Babe to God,
Accepted, even as thine ? ”

Me it behoveth to fulfil
All truth and righteousness ;¹
Like Him who, by this limpid rill,
Still deigns my Babes to bless.

God-given and God-redeemed, I bring
Them back again to God ;
To place beneath His sheltering wing,
The purchase of His blood.²

That He may own them, first and last,
Upon each Infant's face,
In trembling hope and trust I cast
The appointed Sign of Grace.

I pray, “ As this pure emblem shed,
Be thou from vileness free ! ”
And who condemns ? Not He who said,
“ Keep not the Babes from Me.”

Matthew iii. 15.
We justly hold it (baptism) to be the door of our actual
ance into God's house.—*Hooker, Eccl. Pol. B. V.*

VI.

Brought to Jesus.

They brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased.—Mark x. 13, 14.

As, worn and wan and needing rest,
The Master walked along,
The Hebrew Dames about Him pressed,
A supplicating throng.

Their Little Ones with them they brought,
For His kind hands to touch;
Nor, in their partial fondness, thought
Their loud request too much.

“ Bring not your Babes the crowd to swell :
Can *He* an hour afford
To such as they? Ye do not well,
To throng our weary Lord ! ”

The Lord, with much displeasure stirred,
Who ne'er was wroth ere-now,
The over-zealous servants heard ;
And with a darkening brow,

Made answer stern, “ Make clear the way,
And bring them unto Me ;
For, know, that all must be as they,
Who would the Kingdom see ! ”

Confiding, loving, innocent,
With eager, tottering pace,
To Him those little Children went,
And gazed upon His face.

Like zephyrs in a sultry calm,
Like palm-tree’s pleasant shade,
Their guileless talk, their breath of balm,
Upon His spirit played.

And looks He from His Holy Place,
Without displeasure now,
When men the Sign and Seal of Grace
To Children disallow ? ¹

¹ Not passed through Moloch-fire,
Not as the sacrificial firstling slain ;
But rendered as the music from the lyre.

—*Sabbath Chimes.*

VII.

The Beginning.

*Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God,
to dedicate it to Him, and to burn before Him sweet incense.—
2 Chronicles ii. 4.*

“WHAT boots the Water? Can its flow
Wash out the stains of ill?
Its secret roots and fibres show?
Or bend the wayward will?”

O fools and blind! in this pure Sign,
To him who reads aright,
Appears a Laver all Divine,
Of virtue infinite.

That earthly joy or earthly strife,
May not His own estrange,
To Christ I yield them back for life,
For every chance and change.

I build a tower, whose corner stone
In this blest Rite is laid;
Gold, silver, gems, I place thereon,
And ask His holy aid.

Of a good vine a tender shoot
I plant in ready soil ;
To watch and dress till plenteous fruit
Reward my patient toil.

I light this little Lamp of mine,
At God's own altar high,
Hereafter to ascend, and shine
For ever in the sky.

VIII.

The Failure.

Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even at which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.—Nehemiah iv. 3.

“WHAT boots the Water? Many a one,
Baptized in Infancy,
Has ended, like Perdition's Son,
Upon the gallows-tree !”

O fools and blind! though many rove,
And fail the Goal to gain,
Shall we the Starting-Post remove
From one who might obtain ?

Perchance, the malefactor's scorn
Of his Baptismal Vows,
Was of Neglect and Folly born,
Within his father's house.

His Sire began to build a tower,
For storm and battle meet ;
Yet had he not the will and power
The structure to complete.¹

A vine he set, but round about
The hungry foxes were ;
A lamp he lighted, to go out
In darkness and despair.

O Father, Son, and Spirit Divine,
Succeed my anxious toil ;
My building bless, defend my vine,
And feed my lamp with oil !

¹ Luke xiv. 28-30.

IX.

For Life.

He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.—Luke i. 15.

My Child I sprinkle in the Name
Of Father, Spirit, Son ;
That him the Triune God may claim,
As His adopted one.

In loving faith, on humble knee,
For needful grace I pray ;
That he may now accepted be,
And never go astray.

Say not, My Child must take his fill
Of pleasure and remorse,
Until, at last, his wicked will
Is brought to God perforce.

Say not that Nicodemus old,¹
Might not again be born,
Ere he those many years had told,
In doubting, or in scorn :

¹ John iii. 4.

That he who, rapt, at Bethel dreamed,¹
 No earlier grace might know ;
 Or that one soul by Christ redeemed,
 Need ever serve His foe.

The thieves who ravaged Judah's land,²
 And on Mount Calvary died—
 They might have marched at Christ's right hand,
 With Peter by their side.

Great God ! to Thee my Child I lend,
 All earthly, of the earth ;
 That he Thy service may attend,
 Like Samuel, from his birth.

X.

The Mind.

What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.—1 Corinthians ii. 11.

WORKS not the Spirit on the mind,
 Because by thee unseen ?
 Because the traveller is blind,
 Are not the valleys green ?

¹ Genesis xxviii. 11-17.

² Matthew xxvii. 38.

Because thou shuttest firm thy eyes,
And stoppest close thy ears,
Is there no glory in the skies,
No music in the spheres ?

The Wind even as it listeth blows,
Its sound thou knowest well ;
But whence it comes, and where it goes,
Thy sapience cannot tell.¹

In drifting clouds, and whirling snow,
And fields of waving grain,
And eddying leaves, thou seest it go
Careering o'er the plain.

It shakes the orchard's crown of gold,
And strips each bending bough.
It blanches now thy face with cold,
Then fans thy fevered brow.

Why sweeps it o'er sierras bleak,
And seas and sands afar ?
To cool some dying Negro's cheek ?
Or sink a Man-of-War ?

A curse or blessing to bestow ?
Thy knowledge cannot say ;
And canst thou e'er, by searching, know
The Spirit's End, or Way ?²

¹ John iii. 8.

² Job xi. 7-9.

XI.

“The Day of Small Things.”

Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?—Numbers xxiii. 23.

God's thoughts are not as men's. His way
 Of working is not ours.¹
 In dewdrops, germs, and sunbeams, play
 His life-awakening powers.

Vast issues, every hour increased,
 On trivial acts depend ;
 And what at first was counted least,
 Is greatest in the end.

He in the trampled acorn sees
 The oak of distant years.
 The harvest rustling in the breeze,
 In rotting seeds He hears.

The Saint in want and pain content,
 The Martyr, tried and true,
 He welcomes in the Babe besprent
 With this baptismal dew.

¹ *Isaiah lv. 8, 9.*

XII.

“Begotten Again.”

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the Gospel.—I Corinthians iv. 15.

“SAY not, Thy sin-polluted hand
That Infant can renew!
Canst thou the saving Grace command,
On that baptismal dew?

“Canst thou the quickening Spirit give,
To spirits dead in sin?
To bleaching bones say, ‘Rise, and live?
To the new life, ‘Begin?’

“Spirit is spirit, flesh is flesh,
For all thy art can do:
The Hand which fashioneth Men afresh,
Must change their Children too!”

Yea, but that Hand employeth means,
The Water and the Word.¹
Through these, my faith obedient leans
Upon my loving Lord.

¹ Ephesians v. 26.

Pure Water from the crystal spring,
And—as the mind expands,
Pure Truth, from other Wells I bring,
Even as the Lord commands.

Thus, them of Corinth, holy Paul
For his own children claimed ;
Begotten through the Gospel call,
And after Jesus named.

Be this my ever-wakeful care—
Best bliss of ransomed men,
For heaven my Children to prepare,
Them to beget again.

God's Little One, God's Man to-be,
To me entrusted now,
A Saint in Light I wait to see,
With crown-encircled brow.

Will not the Master Shepherd keep
His Lambs unto that day ?
Or only save the long lost Sheep,
That in the desert stray ?

Thy grace, O blessed Spirit, grant
To him, through me, defiled ;
And help me, purified, to plant
The Angel in the Child !

In Adam dead, again alive
In Thy Eternal Son,
Great Father ! let not sin survive
In Thy adopted One.

O joy, O rapture, passing sweet,
Before Thy face to appear,
My twice-begotten Child to meet
In Glory, doubly dear !

XIII.

A Godly Seed.

From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.—2 Timothy iii. 15.

LORD ! in Thy gracious Word I see—
Meet theme for joyous praise,
How Thy disciple Timothy,
Was holy all his days.

The faith that first in Lois reigned,
Then to Eunice went ;
And next, her Child the grace obtained,
Christ's conscript by descent.¹

¹ 1 Corinthians vii. 14.

Ever from her Childhood's changeful hour,
She has been a reader;—
Her taste is boundless, all-conquering power,
Has made her a reader of all.

and this sprung from their birth,
A body that may die,
To beauty and like the earth,
From July monsters.

三

God's Husbandry.

Behold the laborious toil for the precious fruit of the earth, and wait with long patience for it, until he receive the very best after rain.—James v. 7.

WHY lie those acres bare and brown?
Refreshing breezes blow,
Warm sunbeams pour, rich showers come down—
Why doth no harvest grow?

Be patient. Yet a little while,
And all that barren plain
Will meet the sun with answering smile,
And wave with golden grain.

Why hard and sterile still remains
This young, immortal mind?
Baptismal dews, parental pains,
Prayers, vows, devotion kind,

Bright promises, avail not here,
So barren is the soil;
No holy principles appear,
For all this weary toil.

Be patient. Soon the hidden seeds
Of godliness within,
In lovely tempers, words, and deeds,
Will burst the covering thin.

Fear not. That spirit is a field,
Which God delights to bless;
And, in due season, it shall yield
The fruits of righteousness.



XV.

first Lessons.

*The trust of the righteous is a tree of life ; and he that winneth
soul's is wise.—Prov. xi. 30.*

He cannot sing, he cannot speak,
He cannot walk at all ;
He scarce can stand, he is so weak,
Or o'er the carpet crawl.

Yet, Is there nothing that he learns ?
Or nothing that he knows ?
You frown : away his face he turns ;
His Mother smiles : he crows.

She prays : he looks with wondering eyes.
Is not his wonder, Prayer ?
Is there no language in his cries ?
No will unfolding there ?

Believe it not ; for every hour,
Since that frail life began,
Has added to the opening flower,
That marks the crescent Man.

Words said, moods changing, actions wrought,
His life's foundations lay :
Some notion, intuition, thought,
He gathers every day.

- Shall he who pliant hither came,
Be hardened into stone ?
O, be not mine the guilt, the shame,
When God requires His own !

XVI.

“Can it Be?”

O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee ? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee ? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.—Hosea vi. 4.

Often asked, and answer often made,
Still rises uppermost,
The question that will not be laid,
Like some uneasy ghost :

“The Work of Grace—Does it begin
In Baptism ? Can it be ?
In Adam lost, conceived in sin,
Formed in iniquity :¹

¹ Psalm li. 5.

“ Even from the womb estranged, each day
By some strong passion torn ;
Lying, our children go astray,
As soon as they are born. ¹

“ Deceitful, idle, selfish, vain,
Resentful, rash, untrue,
Can they Eternal Life obtain,
By aught that we can do ?

“ No flowers of grace their lives adorn,
Few buds may we behold :
Small hope, that they can e'er be born
Again, till they are old !

“ The old man yet survives ; the new,
We wait in vain to see :
Their goodness as the early dew,
Can these God's Children be ?”

¹ Psalm lviii. 3.

XVII.

“Alas, Poor Ghost!”

are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts.—Luke xvi. 15.

“ALAS, poor Ghost!” that wanderest lone,
In scenes of nightly gloom;
That visitest the cold head-stone,
Or well-remembered room :

Or mournst, in favourite haunts of yore,
The chances past and gone;
The hopes that may return no more,
The duties left undone !

So piteous is the restless state
Of him who lives in vain;
Who errs, yet strives with labour great,
His wisdom to maintain :

Who idle stands, till eventide
Obscures both earth and skies;
Then seeks his guilt and shame to hide,
In questions and replies !

XVIII.

Weighed, and Wanting.

*I speak that which I have seen with My Father: and ye [redacted]
that which ye have seen with your father.—John viii. 3*

O THOU, to whose distempered sight,
God's Sons unholy be !
What boots the presence of the light,
To him who will not see ?¹

Thy Little Ones, by Jesus bought—
Are they from Him afar ?
Perchance, within thy breast, unsought,
The hidden causes are.

Slight they His truth, and spurn His rule,
And to the world return ?
Who are the Teachers, in the School
Wherein they needs must learn ?

¹ To follow foolish precedents, and wink
With both our eyes, is easier than to think.—

Cowper.

Dost thou thyself a Saint approve—
In righteous balance weighed,
By trust, and reverence, and love,
And due obedience paid ?

Hast thou no vice to put away ?
No earthly, sinful care,
That desecrates God's Holy Day ?¹
No wandering thoughts in prayer ?

What, if by early grace Divine,
Their evil hearts were changed ;
And now, again, through fault of thine,
They are from God estranged ?

What, if the budding vanities,
In their apt Childhood rife,
Appear to their observant eyes,
Full-blossomed in thy life ?²

While rise thy feeble Vespers vain,
Thy formal Matins loud,
Doth not thy soul beneath remain,
All passionate and proud ?

Perchance, their 'gnat' may overstrain
Thy charity ; while they,

¹ Amos viii. 5.

² Matthew vii. 5.

From thee must gorge with greater pain,
A 'camel' every day.¹

Perchance, thou mournst their harmless mirth ;
While in thy bosom sty
All thoughts unclean, and Self and Earth,
Thy soul to Hell ally.

O, by thy tattered figleaves screened
In vain, from ghostly note,
Even from the Altar, soon the Fiend
Shall drag thee by the throat !

XIX.

Christian Households.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children.—
Acts ii. 39.

THE bidding of their Lord to do,²
The servants hastened forth.
These, to the sunny South withdrew ;
Those, to the shivering North.

¹ Matthew xxiii. 24.

² Mark xvi. 15.

Oppressed, despised, but not ashamed,
To myriads, great and small,
The joyful message they proclaimed,
Which offers peace to all.

Peace, mercy, and goodwill they brought,
For all with Heaven at strife ;
The lost in noisome places sought,
And taught the lore of Life.

Nor vainly taught. Where'er they came,
Babes, youths, transgressors old,
They gathered in the Master's name,
Into the Gospel fold.

Earth-worn, Hell-chased, through deepening night,
These sped across the wild,
To where, hill-girdled, bathed in light,
A Beulah-land, it smiled.

First, Prisca, leaning on her mate,
Approaches to the door ;¹
Where, brought by faithful Philip, wait
His gifted daughters four.²

Next, all with faith and hope aglow—
By Peter gathered in,

¹ Acts xviii. 2 ; ² Timothy iv. 19.

² Acts xxi. 8, 9.

The firstfruits of the Gentiles go,
Cornelius and his kin.¹

Now, Rufus, leading her who bare
Him, thither gladly wends;²
Then, Nereus with his sister fair,³
And Chloë with her friends.⁴

Here, with her Babes, comes Lydia, charmed;⁵
There, with the Gaoler, all
His house, by ghostly fears alarmed,
Obey the gracious call.⁶

Hard by, with all his Seed, his vows
Doth Stephanus record;⁷
And each Believer brings his house,
An offering to the Lord.

So, at His doorposts mine shall wait;
Since He—The Crucified,
Unlocked for all the golden gate,
And left it open wide.

So, beat by wintry wind and rain,
All families of mankind,
This refuge and repose may gain,
Nor leave a hoof behind.

¹ Acts x.

² Romans xvi. 13.

³ Ibid. xvi. 15.

⁴ 1 Corinthians i. 11.

⁵ Acts xvi. 14, 15.

⁶ Ibid. xvi. 34.

⁷ 1 Corinthians i. 16.

XX.

Procrastination.

When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it ; for He hath no pleasure in fools : pay that which thou hast vowed.
—Ecclesiastes v. 4.

LORD, Thy high bidding we forget—
“To EVERY CREATURE cry !”
And hence, the ransomed nations yet
In Satan’s keeping lie.

Grown strong in folly and deceit,
In heart and life a-wry,¹
The Fathers we exhort, entreat ;
The Children we pass by.

The Children we pass by, beset
With sins of every dye ;
Till Self and Sloth despairs beget,
That faith and hope deny.²

Mild, we their evil passions whet ;
Severe, their good decry :
Till vain are every wile and threat,
To lure or terrify.

¹ Isaiah xxvi. 10. ² Jeremiah ii. 25.



Why stand ye idle in the street,
 Ye Little Loiterers, why?
 “No man hath offered hiring meet!”
 Comes back the sad reply.¹

The sad reply comes back, replete
 With childish agony;
 Yet we indulge the fond conceit,
 To hire them—By-and-by!

Enslaved, they vainly toil and sweat,
 And droop in places dry:
 Their deep-felt needs we leave unmet,
 Their aspirations high.

Deceived, forbidden fruit they eat,
 To poisoned wells apply;
 And Duty galls, and Sin is sweet,
 But Death and Hell are nigh!²

Still wears the day, still grows their debt,
 Still worthless aids they try;
 Still closer draws the fowler’s net,³
 Still darker grows the sky.

¹ Matthew xx. 6, 7.

² Proverbs ix. 17, 18.

³ Isaiah xxviii. 22.

Before them then a door we set,
Swung wide, and bid them, fly !
O'er present ills they chide, and fret,
The Future they defy.¹

On each Tomorrow still they bet,
Until Tonight they die :
Too late, their folly we regret,
And o'er our weakness sigh !

Grave thoughts we put away, nor let
Stern Truth her rede apply—
“In You, their ghostly murderers met,
On You, the guilt must lie !”

¹ *Ibid* i. 5.

XXI.

The Church's Folly.

*As his name is, so is he ; Nabal is his name, and fo—
with him.—I Samuel xxv. 25.*

*This their way is their folly : yet their posterity app—
their sayings.—Psalm xlix. 13.*

THE Church—to evil hands betrayed,
That should encompass All,
A Penitentiary is made,
Or Foundling Hospital.

Physician good ! Prevention's power,
We know not, or despise ;
That we, in fierce Affliction's hour,
May seem by healing, wise.

Kind Shepherd ! We, Thy servants, sleep—
Though wide Thy lambkins stray ;
That we the long-lost, famished sheep,
May seek—Another day.

Wise Master ! We the noxious weeds,
 Permit to grow in strength ;
That we, by better, manlier deeds,
 May root them up—At length.

The rill, that scarce one's foot will wet,
 We note with heedless eye ;
Till swollen into a rivulet,
 Which daunts all passers by.

The plant—unguarded, we expose
 To violence and storm ;
And idly watch it, as it grows,
 A gnarled and worthless form.

Wise Builder ! We our sons allow,
 Fantastic towers to found ;
That we who, careless, see them now,
 May raze them to the ground.

Great Sire ! We leave Thy Babes below,
 In dangerous ways to roam ;
That we—anon, abroad may go,
 To bring the wanderers home.

Nor hope we to conduct them back,
 Till lost to Virtue's eye ;
Then follow we their devious track,
 With frenzied hue-and-cry.



So use we with ill-guerdoned pain,
 Our mis-directed powers :
 Was ever human labour vain,
 Or folly great, as ours ?¹

XXII.

Christian Nurture.

Feed My lambs.—John xxi. 15.

Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord
 —Ephesians vi. 4.

THROUGH Eighteen Centuries firm hath stood
 The Preaching of the Word ;
 What is there mightier for good ?
 The Nurture of the Lord.

Which wiser is—By labour great,
 To save some wanderers old ?
 Or, rising early, watching late,
 To keep them in the fold ?

¹ See Bedlam's closeted and handcuff'd charge
 Surpassed in frenzy by the mad at large.—

Cowper.

Train up a Child the path to take
Which leads God's people home ;
And he will not that path forsake,
When years of trial come.¹

When from the Church her Children learn
To keep their earliest vow,
O'er fruitless toils she shall not yearn,
Nor strive and cry, as now ;²

But grow, as grows the silent corn,
That late in darkness lay :
Till then—To Christ shall ne'er be born
A nation in a day.³

XXIII.

Home-Piety.

them learn first to shew piety at home.—1 Timothy v. 4.

WOULDST thou thy Children rear aright
For Heaven's majestic dome,
And fit them for that land of light ?
Shew piety at home.

¹ Proverbs xxii. 6. ² Matthew xii. 18-21.

³ Isaiah lxvi. 8.



Some cruel sickness soon may smite,
And dig their timeless tomb :
Wouldst thou with them in Bliss unite ?
Shew piety at home.

When Pleasure woos, in beauty dight,
Sweet as the honey-comb,
Shall they the sorceress put to flight ?
Shew piety at home.

While Error spreads before their sight,
Full many a tempting Tome,
Shall God's own Truth their hearts delight ?
Shew piety at home.

Shall specious form, and gorgeous rite,
And all the arts of Rome,
Beset the grounded neophyte ?
Shew piety at home.

When Sin assails, when Fiends affright,
As by strange paths they roam,
Shall they be ready for the fight ?
Shew piety at home.

When on their heads all ills alight,
When ghostly terrors loom,
Shall Faith and Love not vanish quite ?
Shew piety at home.

On Life's rough sea, with maniac might,
The billows heave and foam !
Shall they survive, in Death's despite ?
Shew piety at home.

Perchance, the years thy hopes may blight,
And shade thy life with gloom :
Thy early love shall they requite ?
Shew piety at home.

If to Old Age, all silvery white,
With tottering feet they come,
Shall Hope and Memory both be bright ?
Shew piety at home.

When, after Death's long winter night,
Resounds the Voice of Doom,
Shall it to bowers of bliss invite ?
Shew piety at home.

That these fair flowers on Zion's height
For evermore may bloom,—
Winter and Summer, day and night,
*Shew piety at home.*¹

¹ Ye in the fold your task fulfil,
And the Good Shepherd on the hill
From far approving sees.—*Keble.*

XXIV.

Silent Teaching.

My father will do nothing great or small, but that he will show it unto me.—1 Samuel xx. 2.

Not by our words alone, we teach
The learners at our board ;
Our tempers, looks, and gestures preach—
Or Satan, or the Lord.

Our loudest lessons least impress,
The glistening of the eye,
The tone, the gesture, the address,
A deeper lore imply.

The motives of our spoken vows,
Our Children see—laid bare :
They catch the spirit of the house,
And breathe the common air.

From their keen sight we cannot hide
Our goodness insincere,
When lust and Mammon, self and pride,
Within our doors appear.

Lord ! how they spy the hollow art ;¹
How piteously we fail,
Thy saving precepts to impart,
Thy spirit to exhale !

What is our household piety ?
A gaudy Autumn flower,
Which yields no honey to the bee,
No fragrance to the bower.

XXV.

The Sluggard's Garden.

*How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard ? when wilt thou arise
out of thy sleep.*—Proverbs vi. 9.

THE Sluggard's garden—There it lies,
With all its ruined bowers :
Rank weeds, in wild profusion rise,
And overtop the flowers.

There pine the lily and the rose,
With nettles overborne ;

¹ For by its instinct childhood's eye
Is shrewd in physiognomy.—*Campbell.*

And everywhere the thistle grows,
And everywhere the thorn.

Within the sheltering fruit-trees tall,
 Hide all the evil birds :
By falling door, and broken wall,
 Come in the wandering herds.

The tender herbs fierce oxen browse ;
 Sly foxes spoil the vines :
Around the fig-tree's fruitless boughs,
 The worthless briony twines.

The heedless owner yawning stands,
 Disturbed in slumber deep ;
Then folds again his listless hands,
 ‘A little more’ to sleep.

Say, Father—Is thy hapless Child,
 A sluggard's garden found ;
O'ergrown with youthful passions wild,
 By Love unfenced around ?

Awake, arise, avert the woe
 That gathers in the sky ;
For, swiftly—as an arméd foe,
 The evil days draw nigh !

XXVI

The Feast of Molech.

*They have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto Me,
Pass for them through the fire, to devour them.—Ezekiel
iii. 37.*

FROM Salem pours an eager crowd,
To meet their brazen god ;
With gifts and invocations loud,
To win his treacherous nod.

By David's Town, and David's tower,
And David's tomb, they turn
From David's God of grace and power,
Dark Molech's will to learn.

Forth from the Eastward gates they teem ;
By Kedron's course descend,
To soft Siloäm's sacred stream,
And to Gehenna bend.

There, wrapt in smoke of victims slain,
Lies Tophet, deep and wide—
The Murderer's horrible domain,
Once Jedidiah's pride.¹

¹ 1 Kings xi. 7 ; 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

Where rose the ever-burning flame,
Above the idol-shrine,
Age, youth, and careless childhood came,
The bloody rites to join.

Fond Mothers to the inner ring,
With desperate courage pressed.
What votive offerings did they bring ?
The Infants at the breast !

Abandoned, helpless, bound, they lay
Upon the kindled pyre ;
And louder did the minstrels play,
As fiercer raged the fire.

Drums beat, bells jingled, trumpets blared,
To drown their dying cries ;
And Molech, for the feast prepared,
Accepts the sacrifice.

From flutes, harps, sackbuts, dulcimers,
Pipes, shawms, drums, timbrels, bells,
And thrice ten thousand worshippers—
In tuneful falls and swells,

Fierce Molech's praises fill the air :
By sad Siloām spread—
O'er gardens gay, and granite bare,
Where rest the caverned dead.

Within the caverned dead, who sleep
The slumber of the just,
They wake long-hidden fires, that creep
Through all their tingling dust.

Up Kedron's steepy gorge they sound,
Through dark Gehenna wind ;
And still from rock to rock rebound,
By mountain bars confined.

'To Zion's sacred height they rise,
To God's own temple go ;
Defiant, flout the angry Skies,
And woo the lingering blow.

Nor long may wait the gathered woe,
The judgment, long to-be ;
Shall He who knowledge gives, not know ?
Who formed the eye, not see ?¹

Before the shuddering air was still,
Was heard this burden plain,
Descending from His Holy Hill,
" My Children ye have slain ! "

From Hinnom's gloomy vale accursed,
In horror fled the day ;
The listening multitudes dispersed,
In silence and dismay.

¹ Psalm xciv. 9, 10.

For there was wrath in heaven, prepared
 For all that guilty Town ;
 And God's right hand for vengeance bared,
 Soon fell in fury down.

His bidding to fulfil came forth,
 With wings that vailed the day,
 The hungry Eagle of the North ;¹
 And seized his helpless prey.

So, still, His sovereign command
 Upon His people lies ;
 And when we heed not, His right hand
 Is mighty to chastise.

His Little Ones—His Men to be,
 Now gather round our board,
 Awhile to us consigned ; and we
 Must rear them for the Lord.

His are they wholly, and His own
 He surely will require :
 And shall they pass—His goodly loan,
 To Molech, through the fire ?

Our burden Tophet's self confirms,
 As in its shadows loom
 Eternal fires, undying worms,
 The murderer's hopeless doom.

¹ *Ezekiel xvii. 7, 20.*

XXVII.

The Talents.

*This of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain
My children?*—Ezekiel xvi. 20, 21.

OR at the breast, or by our side,
The Babes are not our own ;
And we, from sin, and self, and pride,
Must guard the precious loan.

For what are Fashion's circles vain,
And Pleasure's glittering halls,
And Mammon's caves, and Honour's train,
But Molech's carnivals ?

God's Children to our Love are lent—
Or One, or Five, or Ten ;
To serve His merciful intent,
And be returned again.¹

Shall we, when life and Time are passed,
With grief and shame appear
Before the righteous First-and-Last,
This dreadful word to hear :

¹ Matthew xxv. 14, 15, 19.

“ My Children, for your solace given—
 Designed My face to see,
 To quenchless burnings ye have driven,
 Who bare them unto Me ? ”

The Babes to Heaven must be restored,
 Or with the lost awake
 To curse their murderers, when the Lord
 Shall inquisition make.¹

Lord ! hast Thou said, ‘ All souls are Mine ;
 Then, be it ours to see
 Our sons and daughters but as Thine ;
 And give them back to Thee ! ²

XXVIII.

The Unnatural Mother.

*My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for
 children's sake of my own body.—Job xix. 17.*

WHAT Elfin powers her way direct,
 Who seeks her own desires,
 And quenches in her cold neglect,
 Affection's holiest fires ?

¹ Psalm ix. 12. ² Ezekiel xviii. 4.

Of nothing, for her Children's sake,
Will she herself deny ;
One frivolous engagement break,
Or put one pleasure by.

The Children shun her glittering state,
Or cower beneath her eye ;
Or watch her, issuing from the gate,
With stolen glances shy.

In Fashion's train, or Pleasure's whirl,
She turns the Night to Day ;
Content to sing, and laugh, and twirl,
And dance her life away.

What learn those little hearts forlorn,
From all that meets their sight ;
The waking to a godless morn,
The prayerless rest at night ?

Consigned—both soul and limb, alas !
To those who teach for hire,
Unchecked, unwarmed, they blindfold pass
To Molech, through the fire.



XXIX.

The Ostrich.

Thou art thy mother's daughter, that lotheth her husband and her children ; and thou art the sister of thy sisters, which loathed their husbands and their children.—Ezekiel xvi. 45.

O THOU, whom fond hearts ' Mother ' call—
Of high or low degree,
Whom Pleasure's silken bands enthrall,
Still cling those hearts to thee !

With speechless longings eloquent,
They claim a little part,
Long sought, in aching languishment,
Within a Mother's heart.

Stay, Mother ! On those young hearts wait,
And grasp a glorious fee ;
For sure, they bear a goodlier freight,
Than golden argosy :

Truth, reverence, trust—an overstore,
Love—an unmeasured sum ;
To grow and deepen evermore,
Through all the years to come.

She doth not hear ! She goes her way !
Let Shame her footsteps track !
Let little wailing sprites waylay !
Let Conscience hound her back !

By no maternal instincts stirred,
Relentless to her Child,
Less cruel is the thoughtless Bird
That speeds across the wild :

That leaves her eggs beneath the sand,
For any foot to break ;
Or robber, with unpitying hand,
From their concealment take :

That hardened is against her young,
As if they were not hers ;
Forsakes them, ravening beasts among,
And reckless travellers.¹

Thus quits her Babes that parent vain,
Her Womanhood to shame ;
Their dearest hopes to crush, and stain
A Mother's holy name.

¹ Job xxxix. 13-17.

XXX.

The Hen.

How often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!—Matthew xxiii. 37.

SEE, in yon rural homestead rude,
The fond maternal Hen ;
How she sends forth her callow brood,
And calls them back again.

Her voice, as they in safety range,
Speaks approbation clear ;
But rings a monitory change,
If any foe appear.

Two, for one morsel fight—She sees,
And straight between them hies :
The stronger, like a craven, flees ;
The weaker takes the prize.

Some thievish cur, or cat comes near—
She, with defiant shout,
Commands her van into the rear ;
And puts the foe to rout.

The hawk, in mid flight, stops to spin
Downwards, his airy rings :
She calls—They run, and hide within
Her strong, protecting wings.

Swift from the overladen sky,
Descends the rattling storm :
She gathers them with anxious cry,
Beneath her bosom warm.

Then, when are still the tall tree tops,
And passed the beating rain,
She bids them drink the lingering drops,
And eat the moistened grain.

Their inexperience she directs,
Points out what they should eat ;
And, for herself, all food rejects
That is for them unmeet.

So—wearier still, and weaker grown,
Their cumber she will bear ;
Till each, well-taught, can hold his own,
And spurns her needless care.



A greater care, O Mother ! asks
 All thy too-fleeting hours :
 A heavenlier employment tasks
 All thy superior powers.

To keep from sin, from error free,
 'To guide to God be thine !
 Such Mothers yet—methinks, there be ;
 And such, I know, was *mine*.

XXXI.

Unhelped.

There cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help ?—2 Kings vi. 26, 27.

THE Husband leaveth to the Wife,
 The training of their Child ;
 As if the crowding cares of life
 Were on his shoulders piled !

As if the Father e'er possessed
 A hope, or joy, or care,
 Which, deep within her faithful breast,
 The Mother did not share !

He, for his offspring would secure
The wealth that worldlings prize ;¹
And she, those treasures which endure
For ever, in the skies.²

With pleasure, friendships, houses, lands,
And honour to attain—
With ever-overflowing hands,
Sick heart, and reeling brain :

The Father owns a world apart,
Youth's little realm above ;
And from that eager, bursting heart,
Withholds his holiest love.

So, from his stern, forbidding face,
That young heart, fear-oppressed,
As to a welcome hiding-place,
Flees to his Mother's breast.

God help thee, Mother ! God is near,
To bless thy lonely toil ;
Thy meek petitions He will hear,
And fill thy hands with spoil.

¹ O, rich the tint of earthly gold,
And keen the diamond's spark,
But the young Lamb of Jesus' fold
Should other splendours mark.—*Keble.*

² Luke xii. 33.

XXXII.

The Woodgatherers.

Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.—Judges xviii. 14.

THE Children gather wood ; the Sire
 Their hoarded labour takes,
 To raise the unholy altar-fire ;
 The Mother kneadeth cakes.¹

All in the impious service share,
 And their libations pour,
 With frantic, but unheeded prayer,
 The idol-shrine before.²

Each mind the wicked worship aids,
 As lewd Astarte wills :
 One spirit all the house pervades,
 All hands one labour fills.

¹ Jeremiah vii. 18.

² 1 Kings xviii. 29.

By union bold, they God despised,
His wrath and vengeance sought ;
And, all in vain allured, chastised,
Their own destruction wrought.

Thus, O degenerate Jew ! with shame
Thy evil ways were crowned.
Christian ! what is the daily flame
Upon thy altar found ?

The Daughter is the Mother's own,
The Son repeats the Sire ;
And each, as in their guides foreshewn,
Will grovel, or aspire.

If Parents knead and bake the dough,
For ends that are not good,
The children to the glades will go,
Well-pleased, to gather wood.

One law will form and fix their fates,
One is the way they tread ;
And one the peril which awaits
The leaders and the led.¹

¹ Matthew xv. 14.



XXXIII.

Isaac and Rebekah.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.—Romans vi. 21.

To hairy Esau, Isaac gave
His heart's best, fondest love :
Rebekah unto Jacob clave,
And for her favourite strove.¹

Against the promise Isaac fought,
To bless his reckless boy :
By cruel guile Rebekah sought
The compact to destroy.

One Parent, to the younger-born—
One, to the elder loath,
With favour now, and now with scorn,
They quenched the good in both.

¹ Genesis xxv. 28.

What fruit in season did they reap,
Weak Husband, treacherous Spouse?
Insensate, they conspired to heap
Confusion on their house!

Who, in yon copse, his gleaming knife
Prepares for murderous fray?
Who, guilty, trembling, for his life
So wildly speeds away?¹

A Brother in a Brother's path,
Athirst for vengeance lies:
A Brother from a Brother's wrath,
In speechless terror flies.

Two Brothers, Brothers now no more,
The way of peace forsake;
And from their Youth's mistaken lore,
Their life's direction take.

Even as his senile, gourmand Sire,²
Red Esau yet appears;
And for his sensual bargain dire,
Goes weeping through the years.³

False, like his Mother, Jacob steals
Through life, with cautious feet;
As still the specious face conceals
The scoundrel and the cheat.

¹ Genesis xxvii. 41-46. ² Genesis xxvii. 3, 4.

³ Hebrews xii. 16, 17.

Weak Isaacs may, I wot, be found,
God's word to disobey :
Astute Rebekahs yet abound,
And plot and cheat to-day.

And to their Children still must cleave
Their follies and their crimes ;
To blight, and darken, and deceive,
Through all their aftertimes.

XXXIV.

The Reign of Terror.

*He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear —
His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break,
and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth
judgment unto victory.*—Matthew xii. 19, 20.

CHRIST'S Law, all human law above,
Enjoineth meekness great ;
But Christians turn that Law of Love,
Into a law of hate.

In fabled lore of old basilk,
We hear of horrors rare ;
Yet miss we, scarcely more, the milk
Of human kindness there.

Heaven loves the helpless Little Ones,
Yet, in the name of God,
For ever on their aching bones,
Descends the cruel rod !

They shriek, they groan, they fill the gale
With agonizing cries ;
And still the everlasting hail
About the victim flies.

They cower, whenever She is near,
Who gave their joyless breath ;
And 'Father' is a name of fear,
More terrible than death.¹

XXXV.

The Rod.

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be dis-
couraged.—Colossians iii. 21.

"Who spares the Rod his children hates."—²
O Sage, in counsel wise,
The truth thy hoary maxim states,
Has bred a thousand lies !

¹ The child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.—

Mrs. Browning.

Proverbs xiii. 24.

Thence men interpretations glean,
 Perchance, unknown to thee ;
 And make this peaceful proverb screen
 All wrath and cruelty.

Not by mere dint of frequent rod,
 Not by the broken skin,
 May love to man, or love to God,
 Or knowledge enter in.

By Wisdom's added precepts fair,
 Her line succeeding line,
 A little here, a little there—¹
 So speeds the task divine.

Was Rehoboäm's youthful age
 Depressed by penal pain ?
 Belike, some Rabbin's madding rage,
 First warped him, heart and brain ;

And led him, from restraint set free,
 To mark his troubled reign,
 With that insensate tyranny,
 That split his realm in twain.

And thou, O second Solomon !
 Enamoured of his rule,
 Is not thy bruised and battered son,
 In every inch, a fool ?

¹ Isaiah xxviii. 10-13.

Scold, browbeat, smite, belabour, flout,
His folly, or his sin :
The lingering Angel will pass out,
The waiting Fiend, step in.

Then, ease thee of thy godless ire ;
And when thy course is run,
Go—hear thy doom, the tyrant Sire
Of that long-ruined Son.

Doth wisdom fail ? God giveth still.¹
Go, ask, for Jesu's sake,
The needful grace that stubborn will
To bend, and not to break.

Let prayers and tears anoint the Rod,
Which speaks a Parent's care :
Each work of man, each gift of God,
Is sanctified by prayer.²

¹ James i. 5.

² 1 Timothy iv. 4, 5.

XXXVI.

Little foxes.

The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. . . . Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.—Canticles ii. 13, 15.

BENEATH the peaceful summer skies,
Unchilled by rock or tree,
By breezes fanned, the vineyard lies,
All fresh and fair to see.

Along each bowed and blistered rail,
Full in the eye of day,
The clinging vines luxuriant trail,
To woo the solar ray.

Afar their branching arms they wreath,
That grapes abundant bear ;
Which waves of witching odours breathe,
Through all the rippling air.

Descending from its leafy screen,
The clustering fruit hangs down ;
Here, tempting in delicious green,
And there, in richer brown.

Ho ! husbandman, of hopeful toil,
Do not thy watch forsake :
The foes, which still thy labour spoil,
The little foxes, take.

So shall thy lord rich guerdon owe
To that firm troth of thine :
With grapes his arms shall overflow,
His presses burst with wine.

Thy vineyard, Christian, lies alway
Within the destined lines,
That limit thy paternal sway ;
Thy Children are the vines.

That fertile, heaven-kissed soil is set
With plants of righteousness ;
Which, though by Evil blighted, yet
The Lord delights to bless.

From Christ, the Light and Life of heaven,
Warm sunbeams ceaseless pour :
Soft breezes, by the Spirit given,
Steal over evermore.

Through every armlet, tendril, shoot,
The vital moisture flows ;
Whence, day and night, celestial fruit
In clustering graces grows.

Ho ! husbandman, of hopeful toil,
Do not thy watch forsake :
The foes, which still thy labour spoil,
The little foxes take :

Rash words, harsh tempers, acts unkind,
Which Youth's affections chill ;
Deceit, that shuts the opening mind,
Caprice, which warps the will—

Pride, anger, selfishness. Let none
Escape thy righteous wrath.
Take them, and spare not ; till not one
Survives to work thee scath.¹

So, when the wearied Autumn wanes,
And Winter comes in sight,
A great reward shall crown thy pains,
A vintage of delight.

So shall thy Lord, that happy tide,
Commend thy long employ ;
And say, “ Come, seat thee at My side,
And share My harvest joy ! ”²

¹ The time of breeding is the time of doing children good.
—*Herbert.*

² Matthew xiii. 43 ; xxv. 21, 34.

XXXVII.

A Father's Tears.

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without wrangling (margin), and without hypocrisy.—James iii. 17.

WIDE open stood the garden gate,
The ripened fruit hung nigh ;
The owner in an arbour sate,
His son was sauntering by.

A strong temptation took the Boy :
He crept beneath the tree,
That fruit forbidden to enjoy,
Where none the theft might see.

Discovered, he with falsehoods base
Denied it as he could ;
But soon before his father's face,
He self-convicted stood.

His father led him to a bower,
From curious eyes away ;
That he, for that short, sinful hour,
Fit penalty should pay.

No marks of sorrow, or affright,
On those hard features were ;
And, ere he raised his hand to smite,
The father knelt in prayer.

Still cold and hard the boy remained,
And reckless as at first ;
Till from the parent, unrestrained,
Hot tears of sorrow burst.

Thus woke the latent Father. Then,
Awoke the latent Child.
With truth and love revived again,
With cries of anguish wild,

Into his father's arms he sprung ;
And promised o'er and o'er,
As weeping to his neck he clung,
To vex his soul no more.

That father from his place on earth,
Has faded, many years ;
The son survives, a man of worth,
Won by his father's tears.

Who seeks, by dint of angry speech,
Or angrier deed, to gain
Trust, honour, love, shall never reach
The joy he would obtain.¹

¹ Ephesians iv. 30-32.

More mighty than all tongues that rail,
Is one that learns to pray :
One tender tear will more avail,
Than forty stripes a day.

XXXVIII.

My Father.

And Barzillai said unto the king, . . . I am this day fourscore years old : and can I discern between good and evil ? can thy servant taste what I eat and what I drink ? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women ?
—2 Samuel xix. 34, 35.

THE Snows lie heavy on his hair,
By fourscore Winters piled :
My Father ! needing now the care
Of his long-cared-for Child.

His feet now totter with their weight,
Now shakes his feeble hand ;
Now fail those accents once so great,
In counsel and command.

Yet reason wanes not, memory lasts,
Love, courage, do not fail ;
And Hope her golden anchor casts,
Secure, behind the veil.

No anxious thought to Death he gives,
 That waits his windows nigh ;
 For he who to his Maker lives,
 A peaceful death shall die.

Fall lightly, O ye timely snows,
 Upon that hoary crown !
 To sink him to his long repose,
 Ye snows, Come gently down !

Be bright his memories ! Be smooth,
 His passage to the grave !
 Be near, O Christ, his heart to soothe,
 And to the utmost save !

XXXIX.

Making Memories.

Remember the days of old, . . . ask thy father, and he will shew thee ; thy elders, and they will tell thee.—Deuteronomy xxxii. 7.

THE Way of Youth to wrinkled Age,
 Through mist and darkness lies ;
 Yet we may crowd its foremost stage
 With radiant memories.

Our early scenes and early friends—
Their presence lingers yet :
On Manhood, Childhood still attends ;
And nothing we forget.

Though absent long from heart and thought,
By some weird Power unseen,
The past is to the present brought,
To prove its memory green.

At some chance sight or casual word,
The crone fourscore and ten,
As by some blest enchantment stirred,
Becomes a Child again ;

Finds all her ancient joys restored,
Rejoins some favourite mate,
Trips gaily o'er the daisied sward,
Or rides upon the gate.

By fever struck, the attic sage
Repeats his nursery lore ;
And mingles in a former age,
With friends who come no more.

Thy Grandsire, pressing palm to palm,
And sitting nose to knee,
Has visions in life's twilight calm,
Unheard, unseen, by thee.

To his lone door the evil hour,
Long-feared, has come at last ;
Yet hold those palsied hands a Power,
Can raise the buried past.

The breast whereon his childhood hung,
The arms around him pressed,
The voice that o'er his cradle sung,
And lulled his fears to rest ;

The hand that stroked his glossy hair,
Now silvery white and thin ;
The pedant in his old arm-chair,
His schoolmates' merry din ;

The threatened ills by him defied,
The ills that shook his frame ;
The mantling glow of honest pride,
The darker flush of shame ;

The Maid, who won his love alone,
Heard his deep-spoken vow,
Walked by his side, a radiant Bride
With alabaster brow,

And brought a bright and blissful dower—
Souls, faces, like her own ;
Those faces fading, hour by hour,
And falling, one by one :

Dead, dead and cold, at his command,
All these from Hades come ;
Before him as they parted stand,
And fill the silent room.

Blest Power, that, when the End is nigh,
When youth and strength are fled,
Recalls the well-used years gone by,
And communes with the dead ;

That gathers from the thorn its flower,
To patient Virtue given ;
And makes even Death's all-dreaded hour,
The very gate of heaven !

O happy he, its distant lure
Who never learnt to scorn ;
Who still with words and actions pure,
Fulfilled its golden horn ;

Who trouble and temptation bore,
Alike with even breast !
To him the latter days are more
Than the beginning blest.

This wizard Power each spirit wields,
Though checked by fleshly bond,
In Manhood's intermediate fields,
Or the dim vale beyond.



To some who in the shadows grope,
 At nameless fears aghast,
 There breathes no welcome word of hope,
 Or promise, from the Past.

To others, Error's joyless wraith
 Comes mocking from the grave,
 To be dispelled, by mighty faith,
 In Him who lives to save.

To all—Whatever good or ill,
 Befell life's early morn,
 Will track its midway passage still,
 And haunt its utmost bourn.

XL.

A Mother's Blessing.

And she said . . . For this child I prayed . . . as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there.—I Samuel i. 26-28.

A MOTHER's prayers and blessing blent,
 Bring greater gladness home,
 Than all the benedictions sent
 From all the hills of Rome.

When fears within the soul alarm,
When foes without assail,
They better screen her Child from harm
Than coat of triple mail.

When pain and grief my bosom wrung,
About my beating brow
That blessing, like a glory hung,
And there it lingers now.

XLI.

My Mother.

*O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give Thy
ength unto Thy servant, and save the son of Thine hand-
id.*—Psalm lxxxvi. 16.

My Mother ! in my growing age,
My heart goes back to thee :
In Memory's book, the fairest page
Thy fingers wrote for me.

Through all my years I weary not
To con its mystic signs ;
For not an error or a blot,
Impairs those perfect lines.

Thy lips my infant spirit taught
To love His blessed name,
Who, in compassion passing thought,
For our salvation came.

To pity men, to worship God,
His guiding hand to see,
His peace to seek, to kiss His rod,
I learnt upon thy knee.

From thy example, other lore
I learnt in after days :
High purpose—from the dust to soar,
Meek tempers, gentle ways.

And still thy voice I seem to hear,
Thy peaceful face to see,
Which made my childhood's home more dear
Then all the world to me.

My Sister in a place remote,
Was smitten by the Pest :
What was—O Mother mine ! the thought
That struggled in thy breast ?

Swift to her dying Child she went,
And knelt beside her bed,
Herself with gladness to present—
An offering, in her stead.

My Sister lives her home to bless,
My noble Mother died :
O, unexpected happiness,
With lifelong grief allied !

How died she ? As she lived, in peace.
Deathstruck, with cheerful voice,
She bade the loud lamenting cease ;
“Rejoice,” she cried, “rejoice !

“ His children still Our Father chides,
Yet is He good to all ;
The Hand that feeds, corrects, and guides,
Will not at random fall.

“ Erewhile, to me, Death held the key
Of everduring gloom ;
But now I know 'tis but to go
Into a higher room.”

Then, by a secret, toilsome way,
With thickest clouds o'ercast,
From pain to peace, from night to day,
Her happy spirit passed.

Like Israel old, with pious breath,
Her children all she blessed,
Ere rose her gentle shade through Death
To everlasting rest.

So, in that distant Yorkshire town,
Which Humber's waters lave,
My Mother, timeless stricken down,
Lies in a stranger's grave.

Now came the dreaded form of Change,
My Father's house before,
That with forbidding aspect strange,
Went in and shut the door ;

And only opened it at last,
For others forth to go :
So were we on the highway cast,
In rain, and hail, and snow.

One—Heaven thee guard, my Brother true !
In joyful sadness sped,
To pitch his tent beneath the Yew,
Which shades our holy Dead.

Beneath the ancient eaves one set—
A timid soul, her cot :
One, in the neighbouring fields, nor yet
Can he forsake the spot.

One fixed her far abode upon
The banks of turbid Tyne ;
One, on Missouri ; and to one,
Fell out a lot like mine :

To plod through life, for others' good,
By ways of mud and mire,
In sun and shade, by fell and flood,
Like Chaucer's barefoot Friar—

Withouten house, or bed, or pot—
Footsore, unbefited ;
A changeful, wandering, happy lot—
A world's Evangelist.

Let fortune foul or fair befall,
Be rich or poor our states,
I know full well, on each and all
A Mother's blessing waits.

Sad, weakly, wistful, I went forth,
To track the feet of men—
South, East, and West ; South, West, and North ;
East, South, and North again.

Some here, some there, have lightly said,
“ What will this babbler say ? ”¹
Some heard the Word disquieted ;
Some turned in scorn away.

Some with foul ribaldry have met
The offers of my Lord ;
Some have the truth received, and set
Their faces Zion-ward.

¹ *Acts xvii. 18.*

But most, the Little Children saw
Their meek Redeemer's charms :
Great Spirit, follow them, and draw
Into His gracious arms !

Afflicted, worn, adjudged to die,
By word of hope uncheered ;
O, Mother mine ! I found thee nigh,
To gild the doom I feared.

Those peaceful moons I oft recount,
That slid so soon away,
Where—ogre-like, Saint Michael's Mount,
Looks down upon the Bay.

Each day I felt thy presence near,
I saw thee every night ;
Thy look of love serenely clear,
Thy form divinely bright.

But God is good, and I was spared ;
And with increasing strength,
Heart, hope, and hands for work prepared,
All these came back at length.

Attended by thy spirit dear,
To thy sweet memory wed,
I wandered till my thirtieth year
Had glided o'er my head.

Who guided next my wandering feet,
O gentle Mother mine?
Who bade me go? O, well I weet,
The whispered word was thine!

Where Thames pursues his winding way,
I met a Maiden bright:
Let sunshine ever cheer that day,
And blissful dreams that night!

“My Mother, such as she, wast thou,
Before thy Babes were born—
In face and form, from feet to brow!”
I said, that happy morn.

She spake—The music was thy own;
She smiled, the smile was thine:
Said I, “I would forsake a throne,
To call this Maiden mine!”

I made her place within my breast,
And thither soon she fled,
As flees a turtle to its nest;
And I was comforted.¹

Since then, swift years of love have sped—
Two decades full, and more;
And I have ceased my Mother dead
In secret to deplore.

¹ Genesis xxiv. 67.



Yet, guided by her lore divine,
Her life in truth complete,
In hope still wander I and mine,
Her living form to meet.

And she is present yet, and still
She walketh at my side :
I felt it as my rebel will
Rose, when my Infant died.

Resigned, we laid him down, to sleep
Among the Autumn flowers ;
For purer hands than ours to keep,
In fairer scenes than ours.

Sure, much is fact that fancy seems ;
And, in her loving care,
I oft have seen him in my dreams,
And he was happy there.

XLII.

A Goodly Heritage.

A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.—
Proverbs xiii. 22.

My Mother ! I the Goodness praise,
Which gave me unto thee ;
Who madëst all my childish days
A holy memory.

My Children's Mother ! one in heart,
One be our task of love ;
The saving knowledge to impart,
The wisdom from above :

To point to pleasures that endure,
To aid their guileless glee ;
By words, and acts, and tempers pure,
To show what they should be :

On Memory's earliest leaf to write
A faultless, stainless page :
Be this their dower of delight,
Their goodly heritage.

XLIII.

Angels' Visits.

An angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.—John v. 4

IN fond Affection's loneliness,
And Friendship's dreary dearth,
We think, How might an Angel bless,
By visiting our earth !

With what contentment, what delight,
Our sadness might be crowned;
How he might cheer our lonesome night,
What radiance fling around !

Yet think we not, as round our board
Our Little Ones we see,
They are the chosen of the Lord,
The Cherubim to-be.

Awhile to us entrusted, soon
To God they must return;
And Heaven's first, sweetest, loudest tune,
They must as mortals learn.

“To Him be glory, Who, for us,
On Calvary deigned to die !”
Thus sing the Glorified, and thus
The Saints on Earth reply.¹

O, be it ours to catch the strain,
Unto salvation wise ;
And for the upper choir to train
These Birds of Paradise !

XLIV.

The Coast-guard's Wife.

I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.—Matthew xi. 25.

A YOUNG Wife by her window low
Sat, severed from her lord,
And adding to the stock of woe
Within her bosom stored.

She thought of days that come no more,
And seasons long ago ;
Yet all she thought but added store
To that great stock of woe.

¹ Revelation v. 12-14.

Her early friends away were gone :
Some toiled in lands afar,
One in the Euxine slept, and one
Was in the van of War.

Some, aye the readiest and the best
To counsel and to aid,
Had laid their weary bones to rest
Beneath the yew-tree shade.

And he, than all the world beside,
Most loved, most leant upon—
He, too, was severed from his bride,
And to the Baltic gone.

Where flows the Nene, the Coast to guard
His wakeful nights he gave ;
But now, for Valour's high reward,
He joined Sir Charles the brave.

O, but to see the gallant Fleet
Whose flags were now unfurled :
Where Mercy, Power, and Justice meet,
The wonder of the world !

Thus all her earthly stays, at last,
Had failed her, one by one ;
And many a sleepless night had passed,
Since she was left alone.

Nay, not alone—though ne'er again,
Those faces she may see ;
For sure, those happy Children twain,
Are heavenly company !

One, a sweet Babe, in soft repose
Sleeps the slow hours away ;
And yet that placid countenance glows,
With more than mortal ray.

For visions of a world of bliss,
Are opened to her eye ;
And if she sighs, chained down to this,
It is a Seraph's sigh.

No passion vile her spirit blinds,
No pride has stirred within ;
And hence she speaks to purer minds
Than stoop to men of sin.

The other, a bright, burly Boy,
Is playing near the door ;
With all his own small world of joy,
Before him on the floor.

His top he spins, and cracks his whip,
And on his charger rides ;
His ball he throws, his gallant ship
Across a basin guides.

He shoulders now his mimic gun,
Then beats his martial drum ;
And asks, his round of pleasures done,
" When will my Father come ? "

Sure, that sad Mother may bemoan
Her solitary woe ;
Yet should God's lovingkindness shown,
Restrain the floods that flow.

But still she locks her misery up,
And still her spirits sink ;
Nor can she from Heaven's proffered cup,
The consolation drink.

The sudden question opens wide
The floodgates of her heart ;
And thus the cordial, misapplied,
Adds keenness to the smart.

In anguish suffered not to heal,
She wept like April rain ;
Nor failed the wondering Boy to feel
A measure of her pain.

" Perhaps "—How many a boding fear
Gloomed on her spirit then !
" Perhaps," said she, " thy Father dear,
Will ne'er come back again ! "

They mourned together, till the Boy
Had wept his woe away,
To weep no more, till some annoy
Should come another day.

But not to her may joy return :
Her deeper, wilder grief,
When tears have failed, must heave and yearn
In vain for fresh relief.

Perhaps as coming days expire,
The Children she has borne,
May, like the Husband and the Sire,
Be from her bosom torn.

Perhaps he sickens on the main ;
And who will fan his brow ?
She oft has watched him in his pain,
But who will watch him now ?

Perhaps he, for his Country's good,
Has fallen in fearful fight ;
And Widowhood, and Orphanhood,
Step in—unseen, to-night !

God help thee, Mother, Widow-Wife,
Who only knows thy grief !
God, to thy early-darkened life,
Send comfort and relief !

Now sinks the radiant ball of fire,
And fades the mournful day.
The labourer plods through miles of mire,
To join his Boys at play :

O'er Sutton-Bridge the moon goes higher ;
Along its misty-way,
The river runs ; and Sutton spire,
Hides in the gloaming gray.

No traffic toils, no labour moils,
No rush of life is seen ;
But Earth and Sea are sad like thee,
O, ever-murmuring Nene !

The Infant, whom her Angel keeps,
Is in the cradle laid,
And in her cosey cockloft sleeps
The tiny serving-maid.

The Mother's self, to-night, her son
For slumber will prepare ;
And put his spotless night-dress on,
And hear him say his prayer.

Before her knelt, in reverence meet,
As erst before his Sire,
He turned his little naked feet,
To warm them at the fire.

Cherubic Watchers saw and heard ;
And, hovering o'er his head,
Conveyed direct to Heaven each word,
Their unfledged Brother said.

“Our Father !”—Here a thought of grace
From his good Angel came,
Which lighted up his rosy face,
As with ethereal flame.

“Our Father !” And his head he raised,
To catch his Mother's eye ;
And on her face in silence gazed,
Expecting her reply.

Cheered by the gracious words divine,
“O yes, My Child,” she said ;
“God is Our Father—Thine, and Mine,
Though all our friends were dead !”

With lighter load her soul upon,
She laid her down and slept,
Who—all those many nights a-gone,
Had only watched and wept.

And in her sleep the covering deep
That vails the world on high,
Was drawn aside, and opened wide
The empire of the sky :

Whence glorious throngs with joyful songs,
 Came down the souls to aid,
 Who walk the way which leads to Day,
 By ghostly fears dismayed.

Some, golden harps delightful strung ;
 Some, sheltering wings outspread ;
 Some, smiled on Her ; some, fondly hung
 Above her Infant's bed :

To some her Boy ecstatic clung,
 Some hovered o'er his head ;
 And wondrous were the songs they sung,
 And wondrous things they said.¹

O'erjoyed she woke. With health a-glow,
 Her Babes still sleeping lay :
 On each calm face twin roses blow,
 To greet the coming day.

And are They Angels, too ? For, know,
 Such faces—just, had they
 Who all night long went to and fro,
 Along that sapphire way.

¹ Thy drowsy nurse hath sworn she did them spy
 Come tripping to the room where thou didst lie,
 And sweetly singing round about thy bed
 Strow all their blessings on thy sleeping head.—

Milton.

She rose, nor was the lesson spent,
As breath on desert air :
That morn a reverent knee she bent
At God's high throne in prayer.

“ Our Father ! with no Eye severe,
Thou seest me grieve and yearn :
Thy teaching, which my Children hear,
May I with meekness learn !

“ Our Father !—Rather Theirs, than Mine ;
For They did ne'er distrust
The wisdom, truth, and grace Divine,
Or deem Thy rule unjust.

“ Our Father ! even from Childhood's voice,
Thou hast perfected praise :¹
Be it my better, happier choice,
To learn its filial ways.

“ Make pure my heart from Sin's alloys,
My drooping spirits raise ;
That I may in Thy love rejoice,
And serve Thee all my days !”

¹ Matthew xxi. 16.

XLV.

On Stilts.

*Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.
Be not wise in your own conceits.*—Romans xii. 16.

IN many houses I have been,
Where Christ is owned supreme,
Yet there Religion still is seen
In tone and form extreme.

On stilts exalted to the roof,
So distant are her feet,
That little Children stand aloof,
Nor dare her gaze to meet.

They cower her solemn voice to hear,
Descending from above ;
For, though she may compel their fear,
She cannot win their love.

They only feel how strange it is,
How awful, to be good !
They cannot reach her frosty kiss,
Nor would they if they could.

Is this Religion? Say, is she
Ordained Christ's Lambs to feed?
To meet, with God-like charity,
The world's deep-spoken need?

O, call not her a name so sweet!
I know the impostor well:
She is Duessa, in the seat
Of beauteous Florimel.¹

Religion stoops to sinful men,
And breaks their prison bars;
But *she* withdraweth not her ken
From gazing on the stars.

XLVI.

Religion.

Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.—Matthew xi. 29.

THE Blessèd God delighteth still
His handiwork to bless:
He made each sentient form to thrill
And glow with happiness.²

¹ Faërie Queene.

² Psalm cl. 6.

The world in sin and misery lies,
Mankind rejoice no more :
He sends Religion from the skies,
Their gladness to restore.

She comes our evils to redress,
From bondage to release ;
“ Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.”¹

She falls like sunshine on the lands,
She seeks the lost to find ;
She spreads abroad her bounteous hands
To compass all mankind.

The crowd, with spirits barred, disdain
The modest grace she wears :
The few, with meekness entertain
The Angel unawares.²

¹ Proverbs iii. 17.

² Hebrews xiii. 2.

XLVII.

The Place of Wisdom.

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Matthew xviii. 3.

“ **DECLARE**, O thou who knowest well,
Within what region fair,
Religion deigns with Man to dwell,
That we may seek her there ! ”

Look not where Fashion keeps her Court,
Or Mammon drags his wains ;
Where Pleasure, Self, and Pride resort,
Or Passion holds the reins ;

Or where her praise, in massive domes,
Her votaries proclaim—
Where Faith an idle form becomes,
And Love, an empty name :

Thence, long ago, in grief she rose,
Seek not—She is not there ;
Nor where men preach her through the nose,
Nor in the worldling’s prayer

At home, abroad, where these appear,
In sorrow she departs ;
But, day and night, through all the year,
She dwells with loving hearts.

Among the gentle and the poor,
The modest Beauty hides :
Within the humble cottage door,
Where lowly worth abides :¹

In Manhood's praise, as ends his toil,
When furl the shadows dim :
In Woman's true and pleasant smile,
In Childhood's broken hymn.²

And more she mingles in the play
Of Children in the street,
Than in the schemes of Fathers gray,
Who still her name repeat.

¹ Isaiah lvii. 15.

² Wisdom doth live with children round her knees.—
Wordsworth.

XLVIII.

Spring-Time.

The winter is past, the rain is over and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.—Canticles ii. 10-13.

Run, while ye may, ye merry Streams,
The springs are high to-day :
Soon come the sun's intenser beams—
Run, Streamlets, while ye may !

Bloom, while ye may, ye lovely Flowers,
The sun shines bright to-day :
Night brings the cold and cheerless hours—
Bloom, Flowerets, while ye may !

Skip, while ye may, ye bonny Lambs,
Your shepherd smiles to-day :
Soon must ye leave your doting dams—
Skip, Lambkins, while ye may !

Sing, while ye may, ye Warblers sweet,
 The trees are glad to-day ;
 But Winter comes with frosty feet—
 Sing, Birdlings, while ye may !

Laugh, while ye may, ye Children bright,
 Your joy runs o'er to-day :
 The years bring sorrow in their flight—
 Laugh, Children, while ye may !

The time to laugh is passing by,
 But yours it is to-day :¹
 The evil days are drawing nigh—
 Laugh, Children, while ye may !

XLIX.

Sowing and Reaping.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ?—Matthew vii. 16.

THIS truth, in highest wisdom strong,
 Digest, and hold it fast :
 What is at the beginning wrong,
 Is seldom right at last.

¹ Ecclesiastes iii. 4.

Again to Wisdom's voice attend :
Begin your work aright,
And take good promise, that the end,
Will bring a sweet delight.

Wise workers brave results must see.
This law can ne'er be broke :
Put in an acorn, and the tree
Will be a royal oak.

Another law, since Time began,
Has rarely lost its force :
As walks the Child, the stalworth Man
Keeps his predestined course.

L.

Two Builders.

Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden, which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overthrown with a flood ?—Job xxii. 15, 16.

A WISE man built his house upon
An everlasting rock ;
And when the wintry storms came on,
It stood the fiercest shock.

His neighbour, on the shifting sand,
Laid his foundation vain :
The wind came sweeping through the land,
In torrents poured the rain.

From all the country, far and near—
Green hills, and mountains brown,
The gathered fury of the year
Came rushing, roaring down.

Where is the Builder ? where his place ?
The wise man looks around,
When day returns, and not a trace
Through all the vale is found. ¹

O, Mothers vain ! O, foolish Sires !
Sleep ye, or trifle, still ?
Your labour all your love requires,
Your utmost strength and skill.

Abuse, neglect, begin it late,
And you may soon deplore
Your fallen house, a ruin great
That nothing can restore.

¹ Matthew vii. 24-27.

LI.

The Trial-Trip.

*Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold :
but they went not ; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber.—
I Kings xxii. 48.*

THAT new-built vessel, outward bound,
Will she safe passage make ?
Or burn, or sink, or run a-ground
And into shivers break ?

How brave she looks, how smooth she glides,
How fair she spreads the sail ;
Across the billows proudly rides,
And scuds before the gale !

Too frail appears her fairy form,
All chances to defy :
They come ! tall wave, careering storm,
And all her timbers try.

The heavens grow dark, the tempest roars,
Huge waves her bulk infold :
Through gaping seams the water pours,
And gathers in the hold.

Great God ! that rich and priceless freight,
Shall Ocean overwhelm ?
And is it even now, too late,
To grasp the useless helm ?

Can no one guide her into port,
And from destruction save ?
Or, stranded, must she be the sport
Of every idle wave ?

Such dread uncertainty attends
Each wayward Child of earth,
In heart and mind—by faithless friends
Neglected from his birth.

How shall his feeble footsteps shun
The outspread snares of sin,
The holy race successful run,
And life eternal win ?

Left, at the dawning of the day,
As is the wild-goat, free,
Who can foreshow his devious way,
Or what the end will be ?

Will he Christ's Easy Yoke refuse,
For Error's livery bright ?
Or with unearthly wisdom, choose
The panoply of Light ?

Will he, unspoilt, to God return,
When life's brief course is past?
Or mercy, truth, and justice spurn,
And sorrow at the last?

O, bound for joys that cannot fail,
Or Misery's dark abode,
Thou Man-forsaken traveller frail,
God help thee on the road!

LII.

Unconscious Influence.

For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children.—Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6.

If no one to himself may live,
Or to himself may die,¹
Each age must to another give
Its proper legacy.

Or of all happiness possessed,
Or with all care perplexed,

¹ Romans xiv. 7.

Each race, at labour or at rest,
Still hovers o'er the next :

Its spirit breathes, its influence sheds
On coming men and things ;
Their whole existence overspreads,
And toucheth all their springs.

Through all the years our influence runs,
Some sure response to meet ;
And in our Daughters and our Sons,
We still ourselves repeat.

And some have glory, some eclipse ;
As things which underlie
The water that from limestone drips,
Dissolve, or petrify.

In shouts, and knells, and dying throes,
And merry marriage chimes,
The plastic Present forward goes
To shape the aftertimes.

For good or ill, for joy or care,
For endless Hell or Heaven,
The age that tracks our feet must bear
The stamp that we have given.

THIRD BOOK.

The Vacant Crib.

*Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great wa-~~ters~~,
and Thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest Thy pe-~~ople~~
like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.—Psalm lx-~~vii~~.
19, 20.*

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, conc-~~ern~~-
ing them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as oth-~~ers~~
which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died ~~and~~
rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God
bring with Him. . . . Wherefore comfort one another
with these words.—1 Thessalonians iv. 13, 14, 18.*

I.

Unfolding.

And the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom : and the grace of God was upon Him.—Luke 40.

THE Anxious Mother with delight,
 Her waxing Infant sees
Become a Youth, or Maiden bright,
 By slow, but sure degrees.

By many signs she noteth well,
 What will his future be ;
As from a leaf the sage will tell
 The nature of a tree.¹

She hearkens when the unmeaning cry
 Dies in the conscious crow ;
She marks the ever-brightening eye,
 The face maturing slow ;

The rounder arm, the firmer feet,
 The daily strengthening thews ;
The wisdom to elect the sweet,
 The bitter to refuse ;

¹ Easier each hour the task will grow
 To name the unfolding flower.—*Kible*.

The rising will, which knows, untaught,
 Its bias to declare ;
 The lines of new-awakening thought,
 Upon that forehead fair ;

The heart with pure affection filled,
 Forth-gushing warm and free ;
 The naked truth, the trust unchilled,
 The sweet simplicity ;

The winsome ways, the loving tears,
 Kind words, and thoughtful deeds :
 All these, as pass the changeful years,
 That gentle Mother heeds.

All these she ponders in her mind,
 Like Mary, Mother mild ;¹
 Until at length she joys to find
 A sister in her Child.²

Her love through all survives, and grows,
 And mellows to esteem.
 So some long-tended floweret blows,
 In Summer's favouring beam :

¹ Luke ii. 19.

² When mighty Love would cleave in twain
 The lading of a single pain,
 And part it.—*In Memoriam*, xxv.

With anxious eye—each morn, each night,
We hasten to the bower :
Till there we linger with delight,
To view the finished flower.

II.

An Infant Saint.

But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.—
1 Kings xviii. 12.

O INFANT Saint ! baptized at first¹
In God's thrice blessed Name,
Beloved of Christ, in virtue nursed,
Put not our hopes to shame.

O favoured Flower ! thus early set
In rich and fruitful soil ;
Whom Love will guard and foster yet,
Still cheer our careful toil.

¹ They that can take to themselves, in ordinary talk, a charitable kind of liberty to name men of their own sort Christians (notwithstanding the large reign of Hypocrisy) should not methinks be so strict and rigorous against the Church for presuming as it doth of a Christian Innocent.—*Hooker, Eccl. Pol. B. V.*

O thriving Plant ! whose vernal buds
 Unfold in timely bloom ;
 Still breathe sweet promise through the woods,
 Of plenteous moons to come.

O Heir of Light ! the Kingdom fair
 Before thee lieth plain ;
 March boldly forth to do and dare,
 The birthright to obtain.

With patience climb Life's toilsome slope,
 Nor shrink from danger near ;
 For over thee the Angel Hope,
 Outspeaks the Demon Fear.

III.

Sunshine.

And Jephthah came to Mispeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances : and she was his only child ; beside her he had neither son nor daughter.—Judges xi. 34.

FIERCE sun, red lightning, furious blast,
 Hail, thunder, tempest wild—
 All ills that threatened, harmless passed
 The Heaven-defended Child.

Fair was she as the flowers are fair,
Sweet, as the flowers are sweet ;
And there was radiance in her hair,
And music in her feet.

So thoughtful was that little head,
So sprightly all her powers,
That all she did and all she said
Emparadised the hours.

As over her your spirits yearned,
With passionate delight,
Her happy, answering heart returned
A love as infinite.

And God, you said, was very good,
With such delights to crown :¹
Then, on the Tabor where you stood,
The blackest night fell down.

¹ Psalm ciii. 1, 2.

IV.

The Farmer's Son.

A child of his old age, a little one ; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.
—Genesis xliv. 20.

WHAT time the fields with ripened grain,
Waved in the morning blithe,
And men went forth with lumbering wain,
Sharp hook and swinging scythe ;

From Shunem to the reapers hied
The farmer's only boy,
Upon the sturdy ox to ride,
And share the harvest joy.

Struck by the sun, “My head, my head !”
He cried in grievous pain ;
Reeled in his place and sank, as dead,
Upon the shining grain.

Then spake his Father, “Take the Child,
And to his Mother bear !”
They bore him to his Mother mild,
With all a woman's care.

Yet spread and grew the fell disease,
That human skill defied ;
Till, folded on his Mother's knees,
At noon her darling died.¹

Oh, Mother sad, oh lonely Sire,
Oh stricken souls devout !
So did your hope and pride expire,
So went your candle out.²

V.

Midnight.

And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.—2 Samuel xii. 15, 16.

OH grief ! to notice hour by hour,
A form beloved endure
Disease, whose cruel, killing power
Defies all earthly cure :

¹ 2 Kings iv. 18-20.

² Psalm xviii. 28.

To see that form consume away,
 Or toss, with anguish torn ;
 To watch, with longing, more than they
 Who wait the lingering morn!¹

To view the agony extreme,
 The struggle to get free ;
 To witness Life's last dreadful dream,
 Yet not the waking see !

VI.

The Dying Child.

And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a brushshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept.—Genesis xxi. 14-16.

GREAT Shepherd ! from Thy lofty seat,
 Thy suffering Lamb behold ;
 Oh, hear it for deliverance bleat,
 And take it to the fold !

¹ Psalm cxxx. 6.

Held by the torturing brambles fast,
Behold its tattered form ;
Lost, hunted, beaten by the blast,
Distracted by the storm.

Deep pierced by many a cruel thorn,
Of every sound afraid,
By hungry foxes seized and torn—
Why tarrieth Thine aid ?

Strengthless, despairing, perishing,
To Thee it bleateth now ;
For none may help and comfort bring,
And none can save, but Thou.

Good Shepherd ! from Thy glorious seat,
Thy suffering Lamb behold :
Oh, hear it for deliverance bleat,
And take it to Thy fold !

VII.

Broken-Hearted.

*Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends;
for the hand of God hath touched me.—Job xix. 21.*

INEXORABLE Providence—
His path who shall fore-say?
Four times a blessing to dispense,
Four times to take away!

Oh Day, that in affliction rose,
To sink in settled grief!
Oh dark, dark Night of woe, that knows,
Nor measure, nor relief!

Oh drooping hands, oh feeble knees,
What succours now remain?
Oh leafless, broken, branchless trees,
What hope of life again?

VIII.

The Ruler's Daughter.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.—
John xi. 25.

THE Ruler came the Lord to meet,
When other hopes had fled;¹
In grief, that winged his eager feet,
Yet bowed his heart like lead.

Sure, none but God's own Son to-day,
Could ease his spirit's pain ;
For in that sleep his daughter lay,
Which waketh not again.

The Master took her clay-cold hand,
And clasped it warm in His ;
And from the shadowy spirit-land,
Called back her soul to this.

From Hades come, from Death awake,
Released from mortal pain—
She rose, and spoke, and lived, to make
Two sad hearts light again.

¹ Matthew ix. 18, 23-25.

IX.

Sleeping.

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.—Acts vii. 59, 60.

THEY die not, from whose house of clay
 The light of life is fled :
 To other realms they speed away,
 And none that lived are dead.

In Hell, him-seems, a fiery wreath
 The Rich Man's shade infolds ;¹
 And all who reach the realm beneath,
 Some horrid nightmare holds.

The dying Beggar, Angels meet ;
 His patient faith's reward ;¹
 And Death, to all the just, is sweet,
 A sleeping in the Lord.

From downy beds, in honoured age,
 Some happy souls arise ;²
 While some through fierce affliction's rage,
 Escape to Paradise.

¹ Luke xvi. 22, 24.

² 1 Chronicles xxix. 28.

Thereto the Holy Martyrs went,
With anguished cries and groans ;
All bruised and battered, bound and bent,
With gyves, and staves, and stones.

Yet all the same rich guerdon reap,
Across the sable stream :
Their death is one long, peaceful sleep,
And one delightful dream.

X.

In The Morning.

Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee : Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thy hands.—Job xiv. 15.

SHALL we her fate unsolaced weep,
Who in Life's Springtime fell ?
Lord, if in Thee the damsel sleep,
She surely doeth well !¹

Her suffering Babe the Mother tends
With fearful flutterings wild ;
But with contented hope she bends
Above her sleeping Child.

¹ John xi. 12.

In sleep he gathers needful strength,
 And grows in stature still ;
 And well she knows that she, at length,
 Can wake him if she will.

By Suffering rudely rocked to sleep,
 Close-guarded by the grave,
 His own the Living Lord will keep,
 Who died from death to save.

He waketh through the midnight hours,
 To call them up at morn ;
 And they shall rise, with nobler powers,
 To Life Eternal born.

XI.

At Rest.

Your little ones . . . shall abide in your cities which I have given you ; until the Lord have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and until they also possess the land which the Lord your God hath given them beyond Jordan.
 —Deuteronomy iii. 19, 20.

THE Strife is over now, the pain
 Has spent its fatal force ;
 No marks of that dire war remain
 Upon the quiet corse.

Hope, fear, joy, grief, that lovely brow
May tinge and change no more :
O, she is fair as ever now,
Ay, fairer than before !

The beauteous form is tingling yet,
With Life's last lingering thrill :
Has she the King of Terrors met ?—
She looks so conscious still !

The parted spirit lingers nigh,
As loath to quit the clay—
The house it shall re-occupy
And warm, another day.

The friends who round about her draw,
Behold with bated breath ;
And humbled own, in silent awe,
The sanctity of Death.

XII.

The Chamber of Death.

And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.—2 Kings iv. 21.

INSENSIBLE and cold she lies,
But as a lily fair :
Her forehead dry, close up her eyes,
And smooth her straggled hair.

Proclaim, by the excluded day—
Closed windows, fastened door,
That this diviner house of clay
Is tenanted no more.

With cautious feet, in silence deep,
About the chamber move ;
As when, in fever's hour, we keep
The sleep of those we love.

In robe of spotless white arrayed,
Serenely let her lie ;
In honour of the sinless Shade,
That lingers fondly by.

Her lily fingers softly place
Across her peaceful breast ;
Then kiss once more her placid face,
And leave her to her rest.

XIII.

Desolate.

O that I were as in months past, . . . when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me.—Job xxix. 2, 5.

IN vain you thought to have her nigh,
From busy life retired ;
She in whose arms you hoped to die,
In your own arms expired.

Now worketh the primeval curse¹
A bitterness profound :
Another death, another hearse,
Another grassy mound,

Another homeward way to take,
More strangers at the door ;
All these come on again, to break
Hearts broken thrice before.

¹ Genesis iii. 19.

XIV.

The Prayer Unheard.

Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.—
John xi. 21.

To Jairus Jesus came, and brought
His daughter back from Death ;
But though His sovereign aid you sought,
With agonizing breath,

No Good Physician came that way,
And bent above her bed ;
The burning fever to allay,
Or bring to life the dead.

Was this not well ? The Jewish Maid
From Hades was restored,
To show how mighty was the aid
Of Judah's wandering Lord ;

And he was glorified. But she,
Recovered from the sky,
Was doomed Earth's vanities to see,
And then again to die.

Say, would you have your darling back,
From falsehood's shafts to bleed?
For sin to mar, or pain to rack,
Or error to mislead?

To meet the King of Terrors twice,
To slay the slain once more—
Say, would you snatch from Paradise
That new-crowned conqueror?

XV.

"A Time to Weep."

In that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to moaning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth.—saiah xxii. 12.

GOD calls, the slumbering soul to awake ;
He wounds that He may heal :
Far better that the heart should break,
Than not to hear and feel.¹

Shall we despise the gracious smart ?
Let sorrow rather fill,
And swell, and overflow the heart,
And desolate and kill.

¹ Hebrews xii. 5.

Let Grief bemoan herself. Aloud
 Let Misery complain.
 Who shall forbid the thunder-cloud,
 To drop its heavy rain ?

Did Jesus grieve ? and can His ears
 Resent a kindred groan ?
 He will excuse His followers' tears,
 In memory of His own.¹

XVI.

Light from the Sanctuary.

The entrance of Thy words giveth light ; it giveth understanding to the simple.—Psalm cxix. 130.

I SAW the wicked man in power,
 And thriving like the bay :²
 There came to him no evil hour,
 No mischief dogged his way.

His children walked with joy elate,
 His wishes none denied ;
 He spake with Princes in the gate,
 And men admired his pride.

¹ John xi. 33, 35, 38. ² Psalm lxxiii. ; xxxvii. 35, 36.

Then looked I where the good man wept.—
All cheerless was his cot ;
In Death his sons and daughters slept,
And men despised his lot.

To solve this mystery I sought,
But found not what it meant ;
Till God Himself the answer brought,
When to His house I went.

By slippery steeps the wicked climb,
Among the stars to dwell ;
But God will hurl them in His time,
Like Lucifer, to Hell.

By ways unknown He leads His own ;
Want, peril, pain, and strife
Their steps attend, but all shall end
In Everlasting Life.

Such is the lovingkindness shown
To God's belovéd ones :
His enemies He leaves alone,¹
But chasteneth His sons.

Hope on, till for your house forlorn,
Himself shall undertake :
The night is darkest, when the morn
Is ready to awake.

¹ Hosea iv. 17.

XVII.

“**T**he **L**ord, **H**e is the **G**od ! ”

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.—Exodus xx. 3

WHATE’ER we love and value most,
 Even that our God must be.
 Stood thus supreme your early lost ?
 That was idolatry ;

And God was merciful and just,
 When, on that bitter day,
 He laid the idol in the dust,
 That stole your hearts away. ¹

Was she but as a creature loved ?
 Your purest joys remain :
 Of God possessed, by God approved,
 You cannot mourn in vain.

He who can say, and falter not.
 “Me my Belovëd owns,”
 May boast a better, prouder lot,
 Than daughters, or than sons. ²

¹ Hosea ii. 6, 7.

² Isaiah lvi. 5.

He gave your darling's fleeting breath,
That you His love might prize ;
He brought her to the dust of Death,
To lure you to the skies.

XVIII.

“Thou Didst It.”

The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see Thy name : hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.—Micah vi. 9.

WHEN we endure the will of God,
In uncomplaining pain,
The gentlest whisper of His rod
Will tell its purpose plain.

“ I said, Ungodly men are near,
I will in secret weep ;¹
And these rash lips, a holy fear
Shall, as a bridle, keep.

“ So I was dumb, because the stroke,
O righteous Lord, was Thine ! ”
Thus David in his misery spoke,
Beneath the Hand Divine.

¹ What is so shrill as silent tears ?—Herbert.

But while he mused in silent pain,
 Brake forth in utterance free,
 The fire he could not all restrain ;
 And thus again spake he :

“ Lord, make me know my mortal days,
 How few, how vain they be ;
 That I may spend them in Thy praise,
 And hope alone in Thee.

“ My sins forgive, Thy Hand remove,
 A little longer spare ! ”¹
 And God beheld in tender love,
 And heard his lowly prayer.

XIX.

Israel Entering The Desert.

Your little ones, which ye said shall be a prey, and your children which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it. But as for you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.—Deuteronomy i. 39, 40.

“ OUR Little Ones will be a prey ! ”
 Entering the Desert wild,

¹ Psalm xxxix.

So did each Hebrew father say ;
And closer clasped his child.

Murmuring their lonely way they took,
By cloudy pillar led ;
Refreshed by Massah's marvellous brook,
Sustained by heavenly bread.

From stage to stage, still journeying on,
To Canaan's wealthy shore,
As some fond sire his sickly son,
So them their Maker bore.¹

Murmuring their wondrous way they kept,
Throughout that Desert wide ;
For Egypt's leeks and garlic wept,²
And grieved their gracious Guide.

Longsuffering still, and still provoked,
The rebel camp to view,
From His high seat Jehovah looked
The cloudy pillar through.

Then sudden through the startled air,
His awful voice was heard,
That grief, and terror, and despair
In every bosom stirred :

¹ Deuteronomy i. 31.

² Numbers xi. 5.

“ Your weary pilgrimage retrace,
In sorrow to the Sea ;
Nor dare to come before My face,
With unavailing plea.

“ Your Little Ones, esteemed a prey,
The Promised Land shall win ;
But ye shall perish by the way,
And never enter in !”

There, to the guilty Fathers, came
The gathering shadows dim :
The Sons survived the Land to claim,
And slew the Anakim.

By many murmuring words defiled,
By thoughts and reasonings vain,
Throughout a dreary, howling Wild,
The Promised Land to gain,

We, with our daughters and our sons,
By weary stages toil.
Death bears away the Little Ones :
We grudge the goodly spoil.

And as we raise our voices high,
In sorrow which hath sin,
There sounds a message from the sky,
Above the earthly din :

“Who murmur in their just distress,
Increasing sorrows earn :
Your Babes the Promised Land possess ;
But as for you, Return !”

O Mercy stern, O Justice meek,
Vouchsafe a guiding beam ;
That these weak hearts again may seek,
And find the cleansing stream !

XX.

The Keys.

*Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him !
he that reproveth God, let him answer.—Job xi. 2.*

ALL rule, all power in earth and heaven,
The Keys of Hell and Death,¹
Are by the Almighty Father given
To Him of Nazareth.

He turns the Key of Life, and forth
The little pilgrim wends ;
Of Death, and—or in grief, or mirth,
At once his journey ends.²

¹ Revelation i. 18.

² Psalm xxxi. 15.

Some die as soon as they are born,
Some, by a later stroke ;
As if the hopes to put to scorn,
Which they at first awoke.

To undiscovered lands, the strong
Proceed with steady pace ;
And oft the feeble and the young
Outstrip them in the race.

With stumbling feet, with straining eye,
We make our toilsome way ;
While they on wings delighted fly
Into the world of day.

And so they pass, while we remain,
By countless cares oppressed,
To brood, in heart-consuming pain,
O'er days their presence blessed.¹

For Death, we fain would give them Life,
For toil and suffering, ease ;
And thus, in unavailing strife,
We seek to grasp the Keys :

As if more wise, and just, and kind,
Were our poor souls than Thine—
O perfect Leader of the blind,
Thou suffering Love Divine !

¹ Job xxix. 2, 5.

We mourn, O Lord, our sorrows see ;
We murmur, cleanse our guilt :
In Thine own Hand keep every Key,
And turn it as Thou wilt !

XXI.

Faith's Questions.

Why dost Thou strive against Him? for He giveth not account of any of His matters.—Job xxxiii. 13.

WEAK hearts, that by God's chastenings broke,
Dare not His goodness blame,
Yet cannot say, " He gave, He took,
And blessèd be His Name!"¹

Are not all spirits His by right?²
May He not claim His own,
Winter or Summer, day or night,
By numbers, or alone?

Is not your lost, lamented Lamb
Safe in the Shepherd's arms,
From wintry blast, and Summer's flame,
And Satan's dire alarms?

¹ Job i. 21.

² Ezekiel xviii. 4.

When Self opposed His high decree,
Did He not kindly say,
“ Permit the Child to come to Me,
And keep her not away ?”

Shall not that form, so fair, so frail,
That in corruption lies,
When Love’s strong hand shall rend the veil,
In incorruption rise ?

Will not the heavenly Comforter,
Give joy to them that mourn ?
Will ye not go at length to her,
Though she may not return ?

When rest your weary hands and feet,
When all your griefs are o’er,
Will you not her in Glory meet,
Where parting comes no more ?

These queries great the fountain reach
Where hope and gladness lie ;
For Faith’s firm voice to all and each
Returns a sweet reply.

Weak hearts ! that by God’s chastenings broke,
Dare not His goodness blame,
Will ye not say, “ He gave, He took,
And blessed be His Name ?”

XXII.

God is Love.

We have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.—Hebrews iv. 15.

THE height and depth and breadth and length
Of Love, who shall express?
What mind may realize its strength?
What heart its tenderness?

O, as in promise, great in deed,
On whom Thy Church is stayed,
The more imperious our need,
The readier is Thy aid!

Behold a fallen race ! with none
To pity and restore—
Lost, helpless, all their glory gone,
And doomed to hope no more.

From Heaven to this dark world beneath,
There comes a Mighty One,
To save us by His precious Death—
The Father's ONLY SON.¹

¹ John iii. 16.

Why enters He that Ruler's door ?
 A Damsel, fair to see,
 Sleeps the long sleep that wakes no more—
 An Only Daughter, she.¹

Why draws He to those mourners near,
 And turns their grief to joy ?
 There lies lamented on the bier,
 A Widow's Only Boy.²

Why, o'er yon grave at Bethany,
 His bitter tears and groans ?³
 Beneath that heavy stone there lie
 An Only Brother's bones.

Condemned, dishonoured, crucified,
 Why that last look of care ?
 Why turns His sacred head aside ?
 His Mother weepeth there.⁴

Enthroned again, above all height,
 The Merciful and Just,
 Whence cometh His supreme delight ?
 A Broken Spirit's trust.⁵

O, to Thy Father's house returned,
 Thou bleeding Love Divine,
 No Mother's bosom ever yearned
 With tenderness like Thine !

¹ Luke viii. 42. ² Ibid. vii. 12. ³ John xi. 35, 38.
⁴ Ibid. xix. 25-27. ⁵ Acts ix. 10, 11.

XXIII.

Gentle Jesus.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.—
Philippians ii. 5.

WHEN some besought the Master's aid
For loved ones far away,
A word the healing power conveyed
To where in grief they lay.

Yet went He not those sufferers near
Though wooed in earnest prayer :
The Man of Sorrows lingered here ;
The God was present there.¹

But where the waves were wildest found,
He came the storm to calm ;
Where keenest throbbed the inward wound,
His Hand applied the balm.

Where pain and peril most appalled,
His face in pity smiled ;
As when from Hades He recalled
The Ruler's only child.

¹ Matthew viii. 13 ; John iv. 49-53.

He could prolong the fleeting breath,
 Far distant from the scene :
 He could unloose the bands of Death,
 With fell and flood between :

Yet went He to the house of woe,
 With them that wept to weep ;
 That we might also thither go,
 His gracious words to keep.¹

XXIV.

Only a Child !

Let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.—2 Samuel xiii. 33.

“ONLY a Child !” souls chained to earth
 Unfalteringly remark ;
 Nor pause, in business or in mirth,
 To heed those windows dark.

“Only a Child !” with tearless eye,
 As moves the funeral on,
 Say all the careless passers by ;
 They say, and they are gone.

¹ Romans xii. 15.

“Only a Child !” speak lips perverse,
In consolation vain :
All miserable comforters
To spirits rent in twain.¹

Only an Infant ? Science fails
To measure what they say ;
Nor can she find sufficient scales,
The thoughtless words to weigh.

This world, than that fair shade released,
No greater thing can boast ;
For what man’s folly reckons least,
God’s wisdom values most.²

Only a soul by Christ redeemed
From Earth, and Death, and Hell ;
A light that from the Eternal beamed,
Gone back with Him to dwell !

Only a life by Heaven bestowed,
To perish in an hour !
Only a grain in weakness sowed,
To be raised up in power !

Only the prisoner of a day,
Through all the ages free ;
A traveller, who may never stay,
Till God shall cease to be.

¹ See *In Memoriam*, xxi.

² 1 Samuel xvi. 7.

Only a thousand hopes destroyed,
Only two broken hearts ;
Only a happy home made void,
Till Christ His peace imparts !

Sad souls ! not all they say can make
Your tribulation small :
The purblind counsellors forsake,
Whose Only is your All.

XXV.

Written Behind.

I am small and despised.—Psalm cxix. 141.

The dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. . . . And her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne.—Revelation xii. 4, 5.

EREWHILE, reflective, said I not—
The certain saw recall,
God's wisdom highly values what
Man's folly reckons small ?

I ranged a Yorkshire burial-ground,
All pensive and alone ;
And there "The Pastors' Vault" I found,
By this inscription known.

A lofty obelisk arose,
From massive basement square ;
And they who underneath repose,
Were duly blazoned there.

Successive names distinctly writ,
The solemn record showed ;
And some from various households met
Within that dark abode.

Age, manhood, youth—so spake the stone,
Together slept beneath ;
But Little Children found I none,
In all that roll of Death.

East, West, and South, I sought to find
An Infant-name, in vain ;
But when at length I looked behind,
I saw this writing plain :

"Here lieth JAMES, who ran his race
Ere he Five Weeks had told."
Was *James* unworthy of a place
Among transgressors old ?

Whom Christ's Disciples thrust away,
Nor care to keep in mind—
Of Them HE speaketh, " Such are they
Who shall the Kingdom find."

The Christless scroll consigned to shade,
I read abashed and pained ;
And soon, by due inquiry made,
The sordid truth obtained.

No Father chose that place, apart
From meditative ken ;
No gentle Mother's aching heart
Had ever said Amen.

Hard men, who held the Vault in fief,
Had writ the secret line :
So measured they their Pastor's grief,
So weighed that stroke Divine.

All hidden by a spreading tree,
There stands that record clear ;
A chronicle which none can see,
A voice that none can hear.

Yet ever through the tardy years,
Those stolid souls to shame,
That friendly fir drops silent tears,
Which trickle o'er the name.

O, little honoured by mankind !
Say—In the Roll of Grace,
Have they who writ thy name *behind*,
An honourable place ?

XXVI.

Rash Censure.

No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.—Job xii. 2.

“ By blind indulgence she was spoiled.”
“ Their last, they idolized.”
“ The Lord, displeased, beheld the Child
Above His favour prized.”

“ Let them amend, and not lament.”
“ They must submit to God.”
“ They should accept the Judgment sent,
And hear the speaking Rod.”

All this, and more, my ears have heard,
From those who do not mourn ;¹

¹ He hath no children.—All my pretty ones ?
Did you say, all ? O, hell-kite ! All ?
What, all my pretty chickens ?—*Macbeth*.

Until my very soul was stirred
With anger and with scorn.

Mistaken are they? They are blind;
Nor know themselves at all:
A Saint, if anything, is kind;
But they are swoln with gall.

True hearts must warm with that blest Love,
Which lives, and cannot fail;
But theirs nor sighs nor tears can move,
Encased in plated mail.

XXVII.

“The Poison of Asps.”

Why do ye persecute me as God?—Job xix. 22.

SAY—Ye who, weeping Love to blame,
In judgment harsh combine,
Self-constituted Gods, who claim
Prerogatives Divine,—

When heavy on a loving heart
The Hand of God is laid,

Are not the burden and the smart
Enough, without your aid ?

O Christ, that any owning Thee,
In this poor world are found,
To add more water to the Sea,
Where thousands have been drowned !

Like hidden, ambushed, poisonous asps,
In every path they lie ;
Like hiveless and unhoneyed wasps,
They buzz, and sting, and die.

XXVIII.

God's Fatherly Pity.

They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them : I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble : for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.—Jeremiah xxxi. 9.

SENT by the Mercy that chastised,
New hope and joy to awake,
The welcome boon was loved and prized,
Even for the Giver's sake.

The gift was then withdrawn, to increase
Your interest in the skies,
And lure you to that world of peace
Where all your treasure lies.

Not worshipped here, nor yonder lost,
Or mourned for in despair,
Go on—to meet her happy ghost,
With all the living there !

Know that, whate'er mankind aver,
Your Father's heart is true :
Even as you loved and pitied her,
He loves and pities you.¹

¹ Psalm ciii. 13.

XXIX.

The Watchman's Lantern.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.—Hebrews xii. 1.

I CAME from mourning with my friends,
Who wept their only Child.
With talk of Wisdom's Means and Ends,
Long hours we had beguiled.

I said, their aching hearts to cheer,
“Though hidden from our view,
Perchance, even now, She lingers here ;
And looks us through and through !”

The night was dark. My way afar
In loneliness I made.
Was neither moon to guide, nor star,
Nor man's inferior aid.

I met the Watchman in the street,
Of observation keen,



Who paced his solitary beat,
By me unheard, unseen.

With sudden, startling, dazzling blaze,
His lamp on me he turned ;
Which like the sun's meridian rays
Upon my forehead burned.

Himself, though surely standing by,
Was hidden from my view ;
Yet felt I that with practised eye,
He looked me through and through.

XXX.

No Hope !

Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say ? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods : because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.—Acts xvii. 18.

THE Heathens, in the shades of Night
Their Youth to burial bore ;
To show that, unto them, the Light
Of Life would come no more.

With cries of anguish and despair
The silent night was stirred ;
And, wailing through the solemn air,
Some dirge, like this, was heard :

“ Oh, bright, and beautiful, and brave,
Wrapped in thy winding-sheet !
Is Home less lovely than the Grave ?
Is Death than Life more sweet ?

“ For thee the fruitful earth brought forth
Her corn, and oil, and wine ;
And health, and liberty, and mirth,
And hope, and love were thine.

“ How couldst thou joys like these forsake,
And friends who loved thee well ?
How couldst thou thy lone journey take,
Among the worms to dwell ?

“ For thee thy Sire had herds, and sheep,
And lands, and gold enow ;
Thy Mother would have died to keep
The fever from thy brow ;

“ And in the peaceful village near,
A gentle Lover true—
Thy hand to claim, thy heart to cheer,
From youth to manhood grew.



“ Thy Sire his hoarded treasure flies,
Thy Mother tears her hair ;
Along the sward thy Lover lies,
In passionate despair.

“ How couldst thou fill their breasts with woe,
And shade their lives with gloom ?
How couldst thou Love like theirs forego,
And hurry to the tomb ?

“ Oh, bright, and beautiful, and brave,
Wrapped in thy winding-sheet !
Is Home less lovely than the Grave ?
Is Death than Life more sweet ? ”

This sung, then forth a hireling crowd
In frantic chorus broke ;
And with their maniac howling loud,
The slumbering Night awoke.

Thus they their early dead, by Night
To dismal burial bore ;
To show that, unto them, the Light
Of Life would come no more.

XXXI.

Bring Flowers!

As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flouriseth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.—Psalm ciii. 15, 16.

BRING flowers, fresh flowers, to grace her tomb ;
She was so young, so fair,
So like them in their transient bloom,
Bring flowers to scatter there !

Bring all that gentle zephyrs stir,
From morn till evening shade,
Whereof the shrewd Philosopher
A fragrant Dial made.¹

Not such, the hotbed's fleeting boast,
As flare in tropic skies ;
But those that on our bleaker coast,
In modest worth arise.

¹ Linnæus.

The snowdrop, February's child,
 Pure as the new-fallen snow,
Where bows its head in beauty mild,
 Like Pity, soothing Woe.

The violet by the woodland path,
 That many a pilgrim cheers ;
The Spring-proclaiming primrose rathe,
 That stills his boding fears.

Wan cowslip, slim anemone,
 Sweet marjoram from the hill,
Rose-mary by the sounding Sea,
 The nodding daffodil.

Gay crocus, odorous melilot,
 The white and azure bell,
Affection's prized forget-me-not,
 The cheerful pimpernel.

The daisy, glory-rimmed, which peeps
 Above the frory grass,
To whisper, "Summer hither creeps !"
 And waits to see it pass.

Bring lilies white, for innocent
 And pure she was as these ;
And bring red roses, redolent
 Of precious memories.

With busy hands and nimble feet,
Through all the changing year,
Bring flowers, fresh flowers—whate'er is meet
To deck a Maiden's bier !

A little while in pride they bloom,
Then fade like her away ;
Anon to quit their wintry tomb,
In beautiful array.

Bring flowers, the sweet, the grave, the gay ;
She was so young, so fair—
So rests in hope her slumbering clay,
Bring flowers to scatter there !

XXXII.

In Company.

Ask, now, the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.—
Job xii. 7.

Praise the Lord . . . ye birds of wing.—Psalm cxlviii.
7, 10. Margin.

Not all forsaken on the hill,
Thy peaceful home shall be ;

The tuneful thrush and blackbird still
Will keep thee company.

Thy dirge the finch's pensive "weet,"
In monotone shall wail;
In diapason, passing sweet,
The lonely nightingale.

The lark from thy green bed will soar,
At morn, and noon, and even,
Thy waiting dust's blest hope to pour
Into the ear of Heaven.

The swallow, on untiring wing,
Returned from regions bright,
Will come with each reviving Spring,
And twitter her delight.

The robin, when the storm is high,
And winter-snows descend,
Will carol in the cypress nigh,
Above his sleeping friend.

•

And, lowly type of friendship deep,
The sparrow, all the year,
Will interject his homely "cheep,"
The passing months to cheer.

XXXIII.

Transplanted.

Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Israel better than the vintage of Abi-ezer ?—Judges viii. 2.

SHE waited not the coming Spring,
In all its brave array ;
To hear the merry cuckoo sing,
Or see the lambs at play.

She stayed not till the primrose pale
Bloomed in the hedgerow wild ;
Or, in the solitary dale,
The saintly snowdrop smiled.

Ere fell the January snows,
She drooped, again to rise ;
And now she blooms with Sharon's Rose,
Removed to Paradise.

That day the Lord came forth, in quest
Of Earth's more fragrant flowers ;
And took the rarest and the best,
To grace the heavenly bowers.

Amid the elemental strife,
No more her form we see ;
But He who bought her with His Life,
Will keep her tenderly.

XXXIV.

Mementos.

The child is not ; and I, whither shall I go ?—
Genesis xxxvii. 30.

We miss her voice, as silver clear,
At morn and evening prayers ;
Her merry laugh we do not hear,
Her footfall on the stairs.

The books, the vacant chair, we see,
The useless things she wore ;
The treasured playthings, now to be
Unheeded evermore.

On these, fond fancy lingering dwells ;
And, with impetuous burst,
The hidden spring afresh upwells,
Forth-gushing as at first.

The fire that, lately, upward leapt,
Half-sated, burning low,
Awakes, by sudden nightwinds swept,
With an intenser glow :

So will some casual glance revive
Griefs that awhile respire ;
And stir, and fan, and keep alive,
Affection's altar-fire.

XXXV.

Missing.

*He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place
know him any more.*—Job vii. 10.

WEEK after week, the matin chimes
Will never reach her ear ;
The door will ope a thousand times,
But she will not appear.

The Spring will come with balmy air,
The Summer in its pride,
And Autumn brown, and Winter bare,
And merry Christmas-tide ;

But her we never more may see,
Till we resign our breath,
And go to her, eternally
Triumphant over Death.

XXXVI.

Misplaced Pity.

And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead.—2 Samuel xii. 18.

WE would not with our loved ones part ;
We cannot let them go,
To dwell in Christ's own loving heart,
And all His peace to know.

We pity those who early die,
We mourn to see them fade,
And bend in anguish where they lie
Beneath the yew-tree shade.

We speak, with voices soft and low,
Of those whom God has claimed ;
And still the burning tears will flow,
Whenever they are named.

Yet surely, greater is their bliss :
We toil, we go astray,
The gates of pearl we yet may miss :
O, happier far are they !

XXXVII.

Love's Predictions.

What manner of child shall this be ?—Luke i. 66.

By marking well the verdant field
Of grain, at early Spring,
The farmer estimates the yield
The harvest-day will bring ;

And in their opening infancy,
To Wisdom's eye, appears
What each fond parent's hopes will be,
Through all the coming years.

Their love of right, and truth, and law,
We watch with hopeful eyes ;
And from each gracious leaning draw
The happiest auguries.

The chances that ourselves befell,
Return to us no more ;
But all we reckon possible,
Still lies their feet before.

And we will show the better way,
And lead them on aright !
When some fell fever smites, and they
Are hidden from our sight.

Yet Love survives the anguish keen,
And credits them when gone,
With everything they should have been,
And all they should have done.

XXXVIII.

Immortal Love.

And Jonathan caused David to swear again, by his love towards him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.—1 Samuel xx. 17. Margin.

And David lamented with this lamentation over Jonathan. . . . I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.—2 Samuel i. 17, 26.

IMMORTAL Love ! why, firmer yet,
Endures thy sovereign sway,
When they whereon our hearts are set,
Have passed from earth away ?¹

It lives from Childhood's earliest breath,
Surviving every change ;
Nor joy, nor grief, nor life, nor death,
Can quench it, or estrange.

¹ He cheats not any soul. He gave
Each being unity like His :
Love, that links beings, He must save ;
Of Him it is.

Lucy Larcom.

Love, born of Love that reigns in Heaven,
Which lives, and never dies,
Was ne'er to suffering mortals given,
Their hopes to tantalize.

It fastens not upon the dead,
Cold, senseless body, there ;
But on the ethereal essence, fled,
And living otherwhere.

If fondlier still my lost I love,
My loved one is not lost ;
But waiting, hovering above,
To meet my parting ghost.

XXXIX.

The Bishop.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life ; and he that winneth souls is wise.—Proverbs xi. 30.

A BISHOP, in life's middle day,
Stalwart in limb and sense,
Of might a thousand souls to sway
With fervid eloquence ;

To guide the Church's high affairs
In seasons of unrest,
And bear its multitudinous cares,
These words to me addressed :

“ A wild and wilful lad was I,
My parents' care and pride.
From wisdom far—to bring me nigh
My Father strove. He died.

“ My youth in wickedness was lost.
My Mother's prayers and tears
Pursued me, like a mournful ghost,
Through all those guilty years.

“God’s hand fell on me. I was changed.
 In sad reflections drowned,
 From all profane delights estranged,
 His peace I sought and found.

“My Mother cheered me, counselled, kept :
 I went no more astray.
 One day beside her couch I wept :
 In life’s last throes she lay.

““See, now, how Faith with Death can cope !”
 Thus did she meet the Foe.
 Whate’er I am, or have, or hope,
 To her sweet Shade I owe !”¹

As thus he laid his spirit bare,
 His bosom heaved and swelled ;
 And from the bursting fountain there,
 Thy pent-up floods out-welled.

And thus thought I—If holy Paul
 Might be a castaway,²
 So this good Bishop yet may fall,
 And to perdition stray ;

Yet treasures he their honoured names,
 Who Life’s fair pathway showed,

¹ The late Rev. Richard Smetham.

² I Corinthians ix. 26, 27.

Who knowledge gave, and lofty aims,
And put him on the road.

They who that better Land have seen,
And cannot wander back—
How will they keep our memory green,
Who showed the better track !

In that far haven where they ride,
The moorings cannot slip ;
And can they now forget the guide
Who brought them to the ship ?

XL. *

Promoted.

He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.—Proverbs xxvii. 18.

How is it that ye sought me ? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ?—Luke ii. 49.

WHAT though, when bursts the gathered storm,
Now in the distance seen,
You have no Joseph's stalworth form,
Whereon your age may lean ?

When with long war and travel worn,
 No daughter to advance,
And welcome you in triumph borne,
 With timbrel and with dance?¹

Of all your children, never one
 To come when you are dead,
Like queenly Sarah's thoughtful son,
 And mourn uncomforted?²

Not one who may for God arise,
 Our fallen world to bless?³
O, Parents, with those streaming eyes,
 Say, is your honour less?

Hath not His favour overpaid
 The love and duty shown,
In that He chose your Little Maid
 To stand before His throne?

¹ Judges xi. 34. ² Genesis xxiv. 67. ³ Psalm xciv. 16

XLI.

Children an Heritage.

wise son maketh a glad father : but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.—Proverbs x. 1.

“ Lo ! Children are an heritage,
A portion from the Lord ;
To manhood firm, and tottering age,
A joy and a reward.

“ When waking, working, not in vain,
God loves our work to see,
As arrows to a mighty man,
So will our Children be.

“ They all our foes shall put to shame,
Shall scatter and annul ;
And happy he, of honoured name,
Who hath his quiver full ! ”¹

¹ Psalm cxxvii.

Amen ! O Prince of Minstrels gray ;
 Yet some have lived to prove
Their Parents' curse—To cast away,
 And scorn their deathless love.

XLII.

Sophni and Phinehas.

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.—Proverbs xvii. 25.

“ THY Children, born in evil hour,
 Will I in mercy slay :
As droops a gathered summer flower,
 So shall they fade away.

“ He that survives, than he that dies,
 To sorer judgments doomed,
Shall vex thy spirit, till thine eyes
 With weeping are consumed.

“ And thou shalt mourn the fate severe,
 Which spared that child of shame !

To Eli, agëd, erring Seer,
This bitter burden came.¹

And truly, Fathers there are now,
Who their dead Children mourn,
Yet wish, with bowed and burning brow,
The living were unborn.

XLIII.

Uncertain Signs.

*Eve bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man (or THE man)
from the Lord.—Genesis iv. 1.*

THE Mother in her thankful joy,
Forgetteth all her pain ;
Yet that fair girl, or comely boy,
May bring it back again.

Eve counted Abel's murderer
The Saviour of her race !
And each fond Parent thus may err,
In each sweet Infant's case.

¹ *I Samuel ii. 33.*

That Child, so full of promise now,
 By stages sure, though slow,
 With *Miscreant* written on his brow,
 May to perdition go.¹

XLIV.

Fear Cast Out.

O that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave.—Job xiv. 13.

INNUMERABLE cares and fears
 Each godly Sire must feel,
 Awaiting what the coming years
 In blackest night conceal.

God-given, to God presented, all
 His Children know the truth ;
 And they may stand, but they may fall—
 God help their feeble youth !

But Fear, above our happy dead,
 No shadowy pennon waves :
 All that our hearts disquieted,
 Lies buried in their graves.

¹ Heaven's child and yours, uncharmed by prayer,
 May prove Perdition's son.—*Keble.*

XLV.

Which is Better?

Who knoweth what is good for man in this life?—Ecclesiastes vi. 12.

Ho ! Weepers by that timeless tomb,
Resolve me, if you can :
The fruitful, or the barren womb,
Which better is for man ?

Since now a blessing, now a curse,
Our buds of promise prove,
Tell me, is their condition worse,
Who have no Babes to love ?

One, with delight his course reviews,
Another, but to mourn :
Some bless, some curse, like him of Uz,
The day when they were born.¹

Sang One, now underneath the sod,
How all things gladness give ;

¹ Job iii. 2-10.

And this his pæan, “O my God,
I thank Thee that I live !”¹

“ Ah, Mother mine ! ” Another wails ;
“ You bore a man of strife,
A man whom every hand assails :
Take back this loathsome Life ! ”²

Which is the wiser, truer voice ?
Which is the mind of Heaven ?
May not the barren more rejoice
Than she who beareth seven ?³

Which is the happier estate,
Which fortune best to fall ?
I know not ; but the Lord is great,
And He is good to all.

¹ Alexander Smith. ² Jeremiah xv. 10.
³ 1 Samuel ii. 5 ; Psalm cxiii. 9.

XLVI.

The Fool's Father.

This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice ; he is a glutton and a drunkard.—Deuteronomy xxi. 20.

LET your affliction still have vent,
But think, as ye complain,
You have no child of discontent,
Like dark-browed, brooding Cain.

No Esau, vainly for his sin,
Lamenting to the grave ;
No selfish, mean, intriguing Twin,
A miser and a knave.

No Dinah, overjoyed to show
Her fascinating face ;
Your hearts with grief to overflow,
Your honour to disgrace.¹

No Phinehas, or Hophni bold,
Abhorred of men and God ;

¹ Genesis xxxiv. 1, 2.

No widowed daughter, stiff and cold ;
 No wailing Ichabod.¹

No sons, like Samuel's, to forsake
 The paths your footsteps press ;²
 And, in the Place of Justice, take
 The hire of wickedness.

No favourite Absalom, fair-haired,
 Smooth-tongued, all rule above ;
 With misery and death prepared
 To recompense your love.

No Joiakim, the Sacred Roll
 To flaming fire to give ;³
 No Judas, blood-red, blasted soul,
 In endless death to live.

“ He who a fool begetteth, grief
 Begetteth, likewise, then : ”⁴
 Sage son of the gray Minstrel Chief,
 Again I say, Amen !

¹ 1 Samuel iv. 19-22.

² 1 Samuel viii. 1-3.

³ Jeremiah xxxvi. 22, 23.

⁴ Proverbs xvii. 21.

XLVII.

Two Voices.

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts
unto wisdom.* —Psalm xc. 12.

Ho ! pensive Husband, weeping Wife,
Resolve me, if you can :
A longer, or a shorter life,
Which better is for man ?

Life is a vision of the night,
Uncertain in its stay ;
That, soon or late, when dawns the light
Evanishes away.

Be Nebat's son's strange vision all
Weighed with the summer dream
Abijah dreamt, the lad's will fall ;
The Sire's will strike the beam.

Who dies, a world of wickedness,
And strife, and misery shuns :
Who lives, may curse the earth, or bless,
And rear likeminded sons.

Who lives, may spade or sickle wield,
 A trowel, or a sword ;
 And dig, or sow, or reap, or build,
 Or battle for the Lord.

And he who, at life's opening day,
 In Jesus sweetly dies,
 May a more perfect service pay
 For ever in the skies.

Sang one of yore, “The Lord will crown
 His Saints with length of days ;
 They shall have honour and renown
 Who live to speak His praise.”¹

“I rather praise,” again he said,
 “Them that no longer strive—
 The dead, who are already dead,
 Than those who yet survive.”²

A few short moons, alternate spent
 In fleeting smiles and tears :
 An honoured life, all beat, and bent,
 And silvered o'er with years :

Which is the better, happier fate,
 A mortal to befall ?
 I cannot tell ; but God is great,
 And good He is to All.

¹ Proverbs iii. 16.

² Ecclesiastes iv. 2.

XLVIII.

Age and Youth.

And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.—Genesis xlvi. 9.

WOULD he experience anew,
The changes he had seen,
Who said, “ My bygone days are few,
And evil they have been ? ”

By Six-score years and ten was told
The Patriarch’s pilgrimage ;
And Pharaoh marvelled to behold
His fair, full-blossomed Age.

Yet, to the weary Pilgrim, seem
His multitude of years,
A snow-flake, floating on the stream,
That quickly disappears.¹

¹ Psalm xxxix. 5.

"To see Thy smiling face in Death,
I wait, O Lord!" he cried :
Then, "Lay me in the field of Heth,"
He faintly gasped, and died.

Thus, worn and worried Saints may meet
Delusion of their cares :
They of the Tree of Knowledge eat,
Which Good and Evil bears.

But Children view with other eyes
The mystery of Life ;
No weary care before them lies,
No field of ghostly strife.

No little task, no scolded wrong,
Their hearts will anguish swell ;
For Hope is bright, and Faith is strong,
And Love invincible.

Their brows a glorious halo rings,
The world transfigured stands
Their feet before, and manhood brings
Dominion in its hands ;

But it is cruel, as they clasp
The cup with gladness crowned,
To snatched it from their eager grasp,
And dash it to the ground !

So, in our erring love, we fret,
O'er Childhood's withered bloom :
The coming evil we forget,
The safety of the tomb.

XLIX.

Substance and Shadow.

A shadow of things to come.—Colossians ii. 17.

OLD Canaan ! what hast thou to teach
About the Land we love ?
Thrice blessèd they who early reach
That heritage above !

O goodly Land ! what lies before
The souls for glory ripe ?
Alas ! we miss the envied lore,
In figure and in type.

Thou wast the glory of all lands,
The joy of the whole earth.
O, merry were thy festive bands,
And innocent their mirth !



For God Himself within thee dwelt,
 To guard thy sons from wrong ;
 He caused Philistia's heart to melt,¹
 And made thy mountain strong.²

Then passing sweet was every sound,
 And all things fair to see :
 So glorious was the shadow found ?
 What will the substance be ?

L.

Old Canaan.

And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us.
 —Deuteronomy i. 25.

Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.—
 1 Kings iv. 20.

OLD Canaan ! I a desert pass
 Of long, uncounted years,
 To see thy beauty as it was :
 Old Canaan, what appears ?

¹ Joshua ii. 10, 11.

² Psalm xxx. 7.

What sights are these? what sounds arise?
Old Canaan, far outspread,
Were such the splendours of thy skies,
The voices of thy Dead?

The goats are on thy mountains seen,
The conies on the rocks:
The verdant vales the hills between,
Where shepherds feed their flocks:

The boundless fields of waving grain:
The woods of graceful pine,
Broad oak, grand cedar, sheltering plane,
And leafy sycamine:

The groves of myrtle, aloes, myrrh,
Where balmy breezes played;
Green olive, yellow juniper,
And palm of pleasant shade:

The orchards, charming to the sight—
The red pomegranate-tree,
Dark fig, pale citron, almond white,
And murky mulberry:

The vineyards overborne with fruit—
The grapes of Eshcol rare,
In clusters, one on every shoot,
For two strong men to bear:¹

¹ Numbers xiii. 23.

The beds of precious spikenard, whence
 The ointment Mary poured—
 First purchased for three hundred pence,
 Upon her dying Lord :¹

The fragrant gardens—Sharon's rose,
 King-flow'r, at whose side
 The lily of the valley blows,
 Meet for a monarch's bride ;

And round about thy pleasant bowers,
 All rich and redolent,
 The peerless Paradise of Flowers,
 In varied beauties blent :

The rivers broad, the bubbling rills,
 The birds of every wing,
 The cattle on a thousand hills,
 The hinds who work and sing :

Young men and maids with nimble feet
 Upon the mountains free :
 The children playing in the street ;
 The eld, who smile to see :²

The happy swains at noon and eve
 Beneath the fig-tree's shade,

¹ Mark xiv. 3 ; John xii. 5. ² Zechariah viii. 4, 5.

With none to trouble or deceive,
And none to make afraid :¹

The city with its palaces,
And adamantine walls :
The Sabbath with its holy peace,
The solemn festivals :

The temple with its roof of gold,
Its services Divine,
Its sacred fire : O, Canaan Old,
These blessings all were thine !

LI.

New Canaan.

I pray Thee, let me go over, and see the good land which is yond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon.—Deuteronomy iii. 25.

O Joy, O wonder passing thought,
To see the heavenly shore ;
The city-gates, long-wished, long-sought,
The King whom we adore :

¹ Micah iv. 4.

The kingdom far and wide outspread
Beneath a cloudless sky,
The river in its winding bed,
The mountains towering high :

The grassy vales, the little hills
That still betwixt them rise :
The laughing springs, the tinkling rills,
The trees of Paradise :

The radiant birds that sing and soar,
Or flash across the skies,
Or flit from tower to tree, and pour
Their endless melodies :

The life-awakening suns, that spare
The tiniest summer streams :
The alternating moons, which bear
No blasting in their beams !

The breath of early morn to feel,
The gales of frankincense ;
And find a holy gladness steal
Through each delighted sense !

To pluck the amaranthine flowers,
By streams which babble past
The ever-blooming, blissful bowers !
Those living streams to taste !

To see the spirits of the just
In glory perfected,
Save that awhile their ransomed dust
Must linger with the dead ;

The world's first fathers, favoured Seers,
Apostles, pilgrims gray ;
The ancients, reverend with years,
The infants of a day :

All free from sickness, hunger, thirst,
Detraction's poisoned sting,
And all the countless ills that cursed
Their whilom sojourning !

To be admitted where they dwell,
To mingle with the throng ;
With them to walk, and talk, and swell
The everlasting song !

O joy, O marvel passing thought,
To see the heavenly shore ;
The city-gates, long-wished, long-sought,
The King whom we adore !

LII.

At Home.

And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.—Esther ii. 11.

AND such is Heaven ! and She is there
Among the spirits blest ;
Even than the fairest not less fair,
And happy as the rest !

And she is welcomed by her kin,
Who passed away before ;
And she can never, never sin,
And never suffer more.

And she is strong, and she is wise,
And ever wiser grows :
How would our poring schoolmen prize
The knowledge that she knows !

She sits arrayed in heavenly sheen,
Upon a royal seat ;
And she is honoured as a Queen,
With Angels at her feet.

And she is to the Monarch dear,
Of all those bowers of bliss ;
And she His throne approaches near,
And sees Him as He is.¹

Regrets she that her day was brief,
Mourns she its vanished noon ?
Sits the King's Daughter drowned in grief,
That she is crowned so soon ?

And should your misery be wild,
Or weak its after-song,
That your beloved and honoured Child
Has been in Heaven so long ?

¹ 1 John iii. 2.

LIII.

Remembers She ?

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.—I Thessalonians i. 3.

REMEMBERS she the silent pair,
In Sorrow's weeds arrayed ?
The once-loved scenes of joyance, where
Her little part she played ?

Remembers she the speaking face,
That o'er her cradle hung ?
The arms to whose endeared embrace
Her timid childhood clung ?

Remembers she the pastures green,
The walks among the flowers ?
The Sabbath-morn, the day serene,
The happy evening hours ?

Remembers she the loving breast
Whereon her head reclined ?

The voice that hushed her fears to rest,
And soothed her troubled mind ;

That told her why the Lord must die
Instead of all that live ;
Why He to heaven returned, and why
The Father must forgive ?

Till Time with Death for ever sleeps,
With joy increasing yet—
All this her faithful Memory keeps,
And never can forget.

She smiles upon the hands that gave
Her spirit to the Sky ;
While they are drooping at the grave
Wherein her ashes lie.

LIV.

Departed.

Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest.—Micah ii. 10.

SHE passed away. She did not lose
The Life her Maker gave.
She shakes not in the chilly dews
That settle on her grave.

She sleeps not on the windy knoll,
Where Love has made her bed.
She recks not for the storms that roll
And riot o'er her head.

She is not lost. She does not lie
Beneath the light of day.
She is not dead. She could not die.
She only passed away.

LV.

Ministering.

But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.—I Samuel ii. 18.

SHE came to bless. Awhile she stayed,
Her mission to fulfil.
For this she flourished and decayed ;
For this she waketh still.¹

A ministering spirit, sent
With succours from the skies,
She ministered ; then back she went,
For heavenly supplies.

And often when the storm is high,
And howling at the door,
Unseen, unheard, we feel her nigh—
Much nigher than before :

By mortal sense unheard, unseen ;
But, by a living faith,

¹ Children are God's apostles.—*Lowell.*

Both heard and seen, in voice and mien
Etherealized by Death.

We find her on the lonely road,
And in the crowded street ;
And start to hear, at home, abroad,
The patter of her feet.

We see her in the vernal flowers,
We hear her in the trees ;
She murmurs in the summer showers,
She whispers in the breeze.

A guardian Angel, she is there,
Where'er our duty lies ;
A sacred presence everywhere,
To lure us to the skies.¹

¹ In loving hope with her unseen
Walk as in hallowed air.—*Keble.*

LVI.

Beckoning.

I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.—Numbers xii. 6.

SHE passed away to come by night,
To haunt you in your dreams ;
She seems a Spirit robed in white,
And she is what she seems.

The tree of life her food, her drink
The living waters pure :
Nor tongue can tell, nor mind can think
How bright her garniture.

A river narrow, deep, and strong—
O'erhung with shadows dank,
Next this world darkly rolls along ;
And from the further bank,

She beckons with her fingers small,
And urges you to flee
To Christ the Pilot sure ; and all
Is as it seems to be.

Let not the vision pass away,
Keep it your soul within,
When darkness passes, and the day
Awakes with merry din.

Recall to mind the glorious seat,
The hand, the rushing stream,
The Pilot true ; and haste to meet
The Angel of your dream.

LVII.

The Chorister.

They sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders : and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.—Revelation xiv. 3.

A HOLY pride, a sweet delight,
A blessed hope you felt,
When by your side each morn, each night,
All reverently she knelt.

You taught her lisping tongue to sing ;
And from her infant days,

To Mary's Child, her Saviour-King,
She rendered perfect praise.¹

Then the Angelic Choir had need
Of one more Cherub-voice ;
They heard her hymnings, and agreed
On Her to fix their choice :

Then straight, upborne on downy wings,
They led her to her stall,
Where sits enthroned the King of Kings,
Whose radiance circles all.²

LVIII.

Far Better.

*Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of
praise for the spirit of heaviness.—Isaiah lxi. 3.*

BE your unceasing lauds begun,
Than others favoured more.
Of all your Children, Every One
Has gained the heavenly shore :

¹ Matthew xxi. 16.

² Think what a present thou to God hast sent.—*Milton.*

Each bright and beautiful and blest,
Each pure and undefiled ;
All taken to an early rest,
By Earth and Hell unspoiled.

But mine who live, though they may win
Devotion's guerdons great,
May wander in the fields of sin,
And miss the narrow gate.

While anxious toil, and ceaseless prayer,
Must fill my numbered days,
For you, who doff the hood of Care,
Descend the robes of Praise.

LIX.

No More Curse.

Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders ; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.—Isaiah lx. 18.

BLEST Land that John in Patmos saw,
May we thy glories see ;
That they our earthly souls may draw
Insensibly to thee !

Thy peaceful borders never foe
May enter to destroy ;
No fear thy happy people know,
To damp their holy joy :

No racking pain with cruel sway
To fill the child of woe,
Until the dawning of the day,
With tossings to and fro :¹

¹ Job vii. 4.

No heavy eyes, no fevered brain,
No enervated powers;
No Care in secret to complain,
Or chide the lingering hours :

No Calumny the soul to smite,
No breast with anguish torn ;
No crying, “ O that it were night,”
Or “ O that it were morn ! ”¹

With tearless eye, with cloudless brow,
Who reach thy coast afar,
Have put on incorruption, now,²
And like the Angels are.³

¹ Deuteronomy xxviii. 67. ² 1 Corinthians xv. 53, 54.

³ Mark xii. 25.

LX.

Following.

Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now ; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.—John xiii. 36.

WE know full well they are not dead,
Nor would we have them back ;
But follow them, by Jesus led,
Along the beaten track.

In faith and hope we journey forth,
That favoured clime to find ;
Nor linger on the blighted Earth,
We gladly leave behind.

Still steadier, clearer, as we go,
Beams forth the guiding ray ;
And nearer yet, by stages slow,
We urge our toilsome way.

The glory John in Patmos saw,
Breaks gradual on our eyes ;
To fire our flagging zeal, and draw
Our spirits to the skies.

LXI.

A Year Ago.

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me.—
Psalm xlii. 4.

SINCE those bright eyes in darkness closed,
Twelve moons have passed away;
And that frail form in Death reposèd,
A year ago, to-day.

At home, her place is vacant still,
But in two faithful hearts,
She lives, though slumbering on the hill,
And never more departs.

By grace sustained, with hope aglow,
With love—a strengthening flame,
They urge their way, in sun and snow.
Their own in Heaven to claim.¹

¹ I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in the waste,
The Shadow sits and waits for me.
In Memoriam, xxii.

Yet, at this melancholy time,
Their sorrow re-appears :
Once more the winding path they climb,
In silence and in tears.

To seek again the holy ground,
With heaving breast they go ;
And o'er the little peaceful mound,
Her name they murmur low.

Still soars the lark, and wave the trees,
And hardy daisies bloom ;
Still lightly goes the wandering breeze
Across the quiet tomb.

All sights, all sounds, the soul invite
To join in joyous praise,
To Him who giveth Life and Light,
And speak of better days.

With heart and hope afresh inspired,
With firm, unswerving feet,
They travel on, by toil untired,
Their own in Heaven to meet.¹

¹ Johnny is but gone an hour or two sooner to bed, as children use to do, and we are undressing to follow.—*Abp. Leighton.*

LXII.

Churchyard Flowers.

When I spoke, they did not hear.—Isaiah lxvi. 4.

Ho, Stranger ! wandering here, to pass
 Away thy idle hours,
Tread lightly on the whispering grass,
 Pluck not the speaking Flowers.

Of memories sad, affections crushed,
 And heavenly hopes they tell :
Be all thy mirth and folly hushed,
 And mark these lessons well.

Of spirits sorrowful they speak,
 Of consolation great ;
And thou that solace soon mayst seek,
 With soul disconsolate.

They show how Beauty's bloom may pale
 Into the hue of Death ;
They frailty preach, and thou art frail
 As those who sleep beneath.

They, with their still small voices true,
Proclaim in Wisdom's ears,
A hope which sheds its radiance through
The mists of distant years.

O, silence not the teachers wise,
That speak from God to thee ;
Nor hush these precious prophecies
Of immortality !

LXIII.

The Silver Cord.

Or ever the silver cord be loosed.—Ecclesiastes xii. 6.

Straight to the patient sufferer's side,
Commissioned by the Lord,¹
Came mighty Death with hasty stride,
To loose the Silver Cord.

Though with despair and terror armed,
By his foul parent Sin,²

¹ Job xiv. 5.

² Ibid. xviii. 14.

Yet must his fury leave unharmed
The Life that beat within.

Though armed with terror and despair,
Though stony was his eye,
Yet must he, with a lover's care,
The Silver Cord untie.

He met what dared his way withstand,
With battle-bow and sword ;
But with a soft and gentle hand,
He loosed the Silver Cord.

Still keener throbbed the secret wound,
Still hardlier came the breath ;
Till, with a thankful smile, she swooned
Into the arms of Death.

The wheel was shivered at the well,
The golden bowl was broke,
The fabric all in ruins fell ;
The Soul in Heaven awoke.

Anon, the pitying Power Divine
That fabric shall restore ;
And bowl and wheel together join,
More perfect than before.

The Spirit from the shades will come,
As Christ's own spirit came,
And hover o'er the opening tomb,
Its ancient home to claim.

With one all-powerful, gracious word,
The Lord, to men allied,
Shall re-unite the Silver Cord,
No more to be untied.

From that low bed where now she lies,
He will lift up her head ;
And Soul, and Dust, at once shall rise,
The living, and the dead.

To Soul and flesh, no more at strife,
Shall glory then be given ;
The love of love, the life of life,
The very Heaven of Heaven.

LXIV.

The Resurrection.

There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.—Acts xxiv. 15.

WHAT time the Master journeyed near
The gates of ancient Nain,
There issued forth with pall and bier,
A melancholy train.¹

A Youth they to his burial bore,
A Widow's only stay;
But Jesus bade them weep no more,
And woke the lifeless clay.

Then many blessed His gracious Name,
His wonder-working hand,
His heart of pity; and His fame
Went into all the Land.

¹ Luke vii. 11-17.

They feared, and wondered, and adored,
At such dominion shown ;
And all acknowledged that the Lord
Had visited His own.

What time the Lord with glory crowned,
Returneth from the skies,
The millions sleeping underground,
In every Land shall rise,

Old, young, rich, poor, a surging host,
Where'er in death they dwell ;
And each, with his recovered ghost,
Depart to Heaven or Hell.¹

Stood all who saw, in trembling awe,
When One from Hades sped ?
How will it be, when Earth and Sea
Restore their countless dead !

¹ John v. 28, 29.

LXV.

The Judgment.

Before Him shall be gathered all nations ; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.—Matthew xxv. 32.

I DID not dream, I did not sleep,
My eyes I did not close ;
I felt not o'er my senses creep,
Or languor, or repose.

Within, without, I knew no gloom,
No fear my mind amazed ;
The lamp burnt brightly in my room,
The Yulefire brightly blazed.

The evening hours had passed in thought
Of the great rising-morn ;
And now a vision came unsought,
Of calm reflection born.

To my astonished gaze appeared,
In all its dread array—

Even by the Heirs of Glory feared,
The last, decisive day.¹

The great Archangel's trump was blown,
And Time itself was past.
I saw afar the Great White Throne,
With glorious clouds o'ercast.

And far and wide the Throne around,
The Dead, both small and great—
Just as in dying they were found,
Stood forth to meet their fate.

The awful Books were open spread ;
And each, with joy or shame,
In order as the Angel read,
Made answer to his name.²

Unwrit among the Sons of Light,
Some to the Left were driven :
Some passed rejoicing to the Right,
Hard by the gate of Heaven.

The great were parted from the small,
The evil from the good :
So were they singled out, till all
In two vast armies stood.

¹ 2 Timothy i. 18. ² Revelation xx. 11-13.

Then sadly to the Left I turned,
And in the joyless crowd,
None save the wicked I discerned,
The wanton, and the proud.

The foes of men, the foes of God,
For ever conquered now,
They wept and wailed, and *Ichabod*
Was writ on every brow.

Or bloated with excess, or blind
With headstrong unbelief,
Or swoln with pride, no finite mind
Might weigh their hopeless grief.

All, by reiterated crimes,
Had wooed the evil day ;
And each God's grace, a thousand times
Had madly thrust away.

So far they reached my eyes before,
That much I wept, to see
So many lost for evermore,
O Christ, to Heaven and Thee !

But when I turned me to the Right,
The Holy Seed were more
Than are the countless stars of night,
Or sands upon the shore.

By shining tier on tier they rose,
Beginning nigh the Throne—
So far, that these seemed unto those,
As Asia to Ceylon.

For there were all who had approved,
By deeds their heavenly birth ;
And truth and right and mercy loved,
Since Sin defaced the earth.

There myriads stood, whose lives were passed
In crime, or unbelief:
All these repented at the last,
As did the dying thief;

And Christ beheld their late distress,
And took their guilt away :
Yet were they now in Glory less
Than all the Heirs of Day.

Ten thousand times ten thousand here,
Who in thick darkness died,
Approached their unknown Saviour near,
Whose Spirit was their Guide.

And more than all the rest were they
Who, since the youth of Time,
Were early called from Earth away,
In Life's fair-blossomed prime.

As I their endless lines beheld,
Their robes of perfect white,
Their shining forms, my bosom swelled
With infinite delight.

I saw a little English Maid,
Among those Children blest ;
In all that glory unafraid,
And glorious as the rest.

Beside her calmly waited there,
Unknown in Life to me,
Three upturned Infant faces fair,
All beautiful as she.

Then, passing from the Judgment-Seat,
Two happy Parents came,
With radiant forms, and flying feet,
Those Little Ones to claim.

I knew them well, as on they swept,
For by that Maiden's tomb,
With them I stood, with them had wept
Those Infants' early doom.

Once more I to the Children turned,
And with a cry of joy,
Among the foremost I discerned,
My own departed Boy.

My loved, lamented Son I saw,
With hands outstretched to me !
Then passed my deep, admiring awe,
To trembling ecstacy.

But that there fell my soul upon,
A Hand, my will to thwart,
Across the plain I should have gone,
To clasp him to my heart.

A Voice then all my being shook,
“The Registrar Divine
Has writ his name in Life’s fair Book—
Say, Has he written thine ? ”

A deadly tremor chilled my frame,
Deep anguish filled my soul :
“O Christ,” I cried, “ my humble name
Among the just enroll ! ”

Again, in warning, from the skies,
The Voice said, “ Watch and pray ! ”
And from my straining, streaming eyes,
The pageant fled away.

The lamp burnt dimly in my room,
The Yulefire dimly blazed ;
Without, I felt a sense of gloom,
And fear my mind amazed.

It was the silent midnight hour,
And I was all alone ;
When, sudden, in the old church tower,
The Solemn clock struck One.

LXVI.

Whither Away ?

Enter ye in at the strait gate.—Matthew vii. 13.

THEN, in harmonious falls and swells,
Upon the gusty air,
Broke forth the sound of merry bells,
Glad tidings to declare.

New life awoke my soul within,
For was it not the morn
When He who came to conquer Sin,
At Bethlehem was born ?

To conquer Sin in me He came,
To unlock Life's Volume fair,
And to inscribe my lowly name
With all the Living there.

Composed, I lay me down and dreamed.—
Again the vast expanse
Extended boundless, as it seemed
In my prophetic trance.

But thinly peopled now, it was
To that o'erflowing land,
As is some lonely Alpine Pass,
To London's roaring Strand.

Two ways across the vasty plain,
To different endings led ;
The one, a wide and sloping lane,
With flowerets overspread.

Wide, sloping, winding, I essayed
To trace each curve and bend,
In vain, yet—clothed in mist and shade,
Appeared its distant end ;

Where stood an iron door, swung wide,
Whence shapes of terror came,
And voices that in anguish cried,
And smoke, and lurid flame.

Amazement, horror, pity, blent
Tumultuous in my breast,
For those who by that pathway went,
As on, and on, they pressed.

On passing scenes they fixed their eyes,
They never looked before ;
Nor heard those agonizing cries,
Nor saw that dreadful door.

Not recking to make careful search,
I saw a thousand 'Priests ;'
All serving, though of England's Church,
The Scarlet-coloured Beast's.

Unskilled to follow masters twain,
From one they took their pay ;
But for the other—might and main,
They laboured night and day.

Hence, with all thieves and liars great,
Their lot and portion fell
Remotest from the heavenly gate,
And next the gate of Hell.

Wolves in sheep's clothing, Christ's strong Sheep
They often overpowered ;
And—sight to make the Angels weep,
His little Lambs devoured !¹

¹ They are like the ivy—not set to bring forth fruit unto salvation, but rather to choke and strangle the plants of life.
—Dr. Thos. Jackson, *dean of Peterborough*.

Among them, twenty Bishops stood,
Exclaiming—half in jest,
“ Nay, Sons, we hear of you no good :
God’s people ye molest !

“ The judge, when mortal wrongs his friend,
May put the evil by ;
But you, they say, the Lord offend—
Fie, naughty Children, fie ! ”¹

Then came afar a solemn word,
In condemnation plain ;
Which—if these easy Watchers heard,
Unwelcome came, and vain :

“ Ho ! careless Overseers-in-Chief,
My flock is peeled and rent ;
Yet see ye, and make strong the thief,
By your supine consent ! ”²

All these were one, and one, meseemed,
Their reckoning would be ;
But here, I shivered as I dreamed,
And sought no more to see.

The other was a straiter way,
By foes assailed, and steep ;

¹ 1 Samuel ii. 23-25. ² Psalm l. 18.

Yet was it guarded night and day,
By many an ancient keep,

Where every traveller might obtain
Refreshment, arms, repose ;
And ne'er was faithful pilgrim slain,
Or wounded by his foes.

Beleaguered, narrow, steep, and straight,
It turned not, left or right ;
And ended in a golden gate,
Upon a hill of light.

O'er hill and dell the pathway bore,
Wide moorlands, mountains great ;
Yet always, he who looked before,
Could see the golden gate.

Thence-from, such beauteous forms appeared,
As ne'er on Earth appear ;
Such voices, and such harps I heard,
As mortals never hear.¹

Myself a pilgrim blest I deemed,
Reclaimed from Earth and Sin ;
To touch the golden gate I seemed,
And longed to enter in.

¹ Revelation xiv. 1-3.

But now again the bells poured forth
Their tidings on the wind—
Glory to God, and peace on earth ;
Good-will to all mankind.

To all mankind good-will they spoke,
Good-will, through Christ, to me ;
Who came to break my Tyrant's yoke,
And set the captive free.

Awaking, still the Master's voice
Was sounding in my ears :
It bade me tremble and rejoice,
Through all my numbered years.

That voice, which hope and warning gave,
And passeth not away,
Still whispers—“ I will keep and save
The souls that watch and pray.”

LXVII.

Sassie.

*She is the choice one of her that bare her.—Solomon's
Song vi. 9.*

STILL passing scenes dark shadows fling
Across the path we tread ;
Still speed the moons, and nigher bring
The living and the dead.

Still to the busy, sordid crowd,
Come warning notes Divine ;
And whisperings low, and voices loud,
Addressed to me and mine.

Of my fair flock, but yesternight,
Another sank to rest ;
My Eldest-born, my heart's delight,
My beautiful, my best :

Who, as by the Good Spirit taught,
Kept her baptismal vow ;
And never caused one anxious thought,
Or bitter pang, till now.

O *Sassie* ! here but yesterday,
So thoughtful, loving, true—
Alas ! I know not what to say,
I know not what to do.

Of Jesus I will pity crave,
And light, and strength within ;
To hush these rebel thoughts, and save
From sorrow that hath sin.

The stroke I needed, and will go
In bitterness of soul ;¹
If haply, by the hand of Woe,
His Love may make me whole.

Yet see I thee, with glory crowned,
And heart and hope revive ;
As in Old Jacob, when he found
That Joseph was alive.

A rapturous joy his spirit felt,
His life anew begun ;
Then went he and in Goshen dwelt,
Together with his son.²

So, when the message comes for me,
I will with joy depart,
Thy voice to hear, thy face to see,
And clasp thee to my heart.

¹ Isaiah xxxviii. 15.

² Genesis xlvi. 9-28.

That hour of dread was ne'er before,
So little feared as now ;
For thou wilt wait upon the shore,
With a resplendent brow.

A guardian Angel, thou wilt stand
Beside the opening tomb ;
And reach to me a willing hand,
To guide me through the gloom.¹

LXVIII.

A Foolish Fear.

*In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep
falleth upon men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which
made all my bones to shake.—Job iv. 13, 14.*

ON Her, until the midnight hour
Was all too early gone,
I mused, when, from its ancient tower,
The village clock struck One.

¹ “William,” said his wife, “you are going to Dora.” He made no reply; but some hours after, hearing a curtain moved, he asked, “Is that Dora?”—*Death of Wordsworth.*

Without a lamp my steps to guide,
I passed her vacant room ;
But this I saw—The door stood wide,
And all within was gloom.

I heard a whisper, “ *She* is there ! ”
When, lo ! a horror came,
That sent a thrill through every hair,
A shivering through my frame.

Then spake I loud, “ And if she is —
Is she an Ogress weird ?
An Outcast from the World of Bliss ?
A Something to be feared ? ”

Again, as died the panic thrill,
Said I, “ And if she be,
She is my Darling Daughter still ;
And means no harm to me ! ”

“ Would it were true ! ” once more I said ;
Then rushed into the room,
And with no lingering touch of dread,
Explored its silent gloom.

There came no answering voice, no form,
No sound, except the rain,
Driven by the equinoctial storm
Against the rattling pane.

“ Where are you, Daughter ? Sassie, speak !
 Belovëd, here am I ! ”
 Besides the madded night-wind’s shriek,
 There yet was no reply.

And still, within that open door
 I look, her form to see ;
 But never, never, never more,
 Doth she return to me.¹

LXIX.

Apparitions.

If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.—Luke xvi. 31.

WITH bated breath the gossips tell
 Of Spirits, which appear
 In haunted house, or wood, or dell,
 In various forms of fear ;

That on the trembling traveller wait,
 Or bliss, or bale to bring !
 They lie, a cruel lie, as great
 As Saturn’s utmost ring.

¹ Job vii. 8-10.

Each phantasm—black, or white, or red,
Each sight, each sound unknown,
To some poor Ghost is credited,
Who wandereth forth alone.

Thus frighten they the credulous fool,
And mock affection true ;
While simple Children, fresh from school,
The fearsome lore beshrew.

Stay, coward ! Why so wildly flee,
With throbbing breast and brow,
From that which, couldst thou hear, or see,
Is innocent as thou ?

Why seek a message to avert,
Brought from the shadowy sphere
But that, from thence, thy ill-desert
Has everything to fear ?

Make ready for thy long To-be,
By penitence for sin ;
By simple faith, and honesty,
And purity within.

Where hoary Sinai vainly storms,
Where Tabor's teachings fail,
Shall inarticulate sounds, and forms
Of eddying haze avail ?

Whom common methods cannot save,
Must be to judgment led,
Unpardoned ; though the pitying Grave
Should disembogue her Dead.

LXX.

A Cloud of Witnesses.

But ye are come unto . . . the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.—Hebrews xii. 22, 23.

THE Sainted Dead, since time began—
Resolved the prize to win,
The holy race with patience ran,
And conquered Death and Sin.

To Jesus looking, they o'ercame,
And by His hand were crowned ;
And all, united to the Lamb,
Complete in Him are found.

Now, nigh the gates, with joy they see
The Godly Seed arrive ;

And yield their kindest sympathy,
To us, who yet must strive.

Who is the fondest Watcher there?
The father, husband, son,
The brother, mother, daughter fair,
The wife, or little one,

Whose husband, father, mother kind,
Babe, sister, brother, wife,
In Death's dim vale remains behind,
Not yet made meet for Life!

They bend from their exalted place,
Or speed across the skies,
On viewless embassies of grace,
For silent ministries.¹

Now grieve they, as we idly cling
To trifles on the road;
And now rejoice, to see us fling
Away each needless load.

¹ The Dead are like the stars by day:
Withdrawn from mortal eye,
But not extinct, they hold their way
In glory through the sky.—*Montgomery.*

And when, with sure, though weary feet,
We near the glorious prize,
They hasten forth their own to meet,
And welcome to the skies.

LXXI.

Passing Away.

All things are full of labour ; man cannot utter it : the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.
—Ecclesiastes i. 8.

HERE, all things change, and all things pass :
Our lives are waking dreams ;
And death is life, and flesh is grass,
And nothing is that seems.

But all things as they come and change,
To something further tend ;
To find some broader, nobler range,
And serve some higher end.

Each marriage—whosoe'er the pair,
Whate'er their mutual flame,
Denotes the bliss that all may share,
United to the Lamb.

Each birth, however short the date
Of that new life may be,
Presents a Spirit at thy gate,
O dread Eternity !

Each baptism is, though soon may fade
The memory of its vows,
An entry in the Volume made,
Kept in Our Father's house ;

Each life—be rough or smooth its lot,
Its sky be dull or fair,
A hand to ratify or blot
The record written there.

Each death, whate'er has passed before,
Or happiness, or strife,
Is a departure, by the door
Of never-ending life.

In vain regrets Earth's visions end,
Or aspirations wise ;
Yet on their fleeting hours depend
All human destinies,—

A life of lasting pain or bliss,
Upon a life of dreams ;
And men forego the good that is,
For that which only seems.

LXXII.

Looking Upwards.

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense.
—Solomon's Song iv. 6.

Look through the dark and troubled night,
To see the distant day :
Watch, till the blissful morning light
Rests on the mountains gray.

Here, droop the hands, and faints the heart,
And break life's holiest ties :
Arise, make ready to depart,
Not here your treasure lies.

Who live unto the Lord below,
Their home is elsewhere ;
And, dying in the Lord, they go
To find their treasure there.

We come from toil, with longing mind,
To miss some pleasant face ;
We toil, and come again, to find
Another vacant place.

We look for smiles and voices sweet
To meet us at the door ;
And find but slow and solemn feet
Upon the silent floor.

The greetings of a happy past,
We crave, unsatisfied ;
'Till to the waiting grave we haste,
Our lonely heads to hide.

As, one by one, our friends remove,
We, who a while survive,
Are closer drawn, in holier love,
For better things to strive.

Their loss our spirits more prepares
To follow where they led ;
For We are Heaven's immortal heirs,
Together with the Dead.

Howe'er we part, where'er we roam,
One will our meeting be ;
One Father great, one heavenly home,
One glad Eternity.

One we shall gather round the throne,
In that unclouded clime ;
When all the storms are overblown,
That parted us in Time.



The fears that agitate the breast,
The hopes that cheer the heart—
They whisper, “This is not your rest ;
Arise ye, and depart !”

Look through the fleeting shades of night,
Look for the coming day ;
Look to the mountains tipped with light,
Look upwards, and—Away !

Conclusion.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another faith by the same Spirit . . . But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.—I Corinthians xii. 8, 9, 11.

SPIRIT ! Whom Milton sought, to aid
His labouring heart and brain,
By whom was willing answer made,
In his immortal strain ;

Twelve years ago, Thy aid I sought,
For my inferior skill :
Hast Thou to birth this Infant brought ?
Were Thine the strength and will ?

Then let it live ; and be its boast,
Thy Name to glorify :
No other wish, O Lord, Thou knowst,
No other aim, have I.

Far have I crept, with anxious heed,
And twanged my little horn ;

To warn and cheer the Godly Seed,
For thereto was I born.

Thou knowst I make sincere assay ;
And I would fondly hope,
I have not stumbled, even as they
Who in thick darkness grope.

But other toils have filled my hands,
More cares my mind perplexed :
Now, elsewhere doing Thy commands ;
Then, by shrill earth-calls vexed.

And thus the work has been delayed,
Though ever kept in mind ;
And still I wooed, my hand to aid,
Thy influences kind.

Yet I am weak, and what is wrong,
I meekly claim as mine ;
But what is wise, or good, or strong,
Is altogether Thine.

For Thine, I ask Thy loud Amen,
For mine, I crave defeat ;
And here I dry my well-worn pen,
And drop it at Thy feet.





